

AUSTRALIA'S WILDERNESS ADVENTURE MAGAZINE

# Wild

MORE THAN 30 YEARS OF WILDERNESS ADVENTURE HERITAGE

ISSUE

155

THE TRAVELLING RIVER RED GUM  
NZ'S COLOURED MOUNTAINS  
180KM ALONG THE SCENIC RIM  
PHOTOGRAPHER GILBERT ROMANE  
PROFILE: REG GRUNDY  
OUTFITTING YOUR OPEN CANOE  
TRIED AND TESTED: TRAIL RUNNERS  
LAVENDER FEDERATION TRAIL

Bob Brown: BP in the Bight  
Bhutan's Snowman Trek  
Spectacular Colorado River  
Getting into trail running  
Recipes for delicious dips

*The limits of  
endurance*

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# Wild

Australian Wilderness Magazine

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Wild would like to  
acknowledge and show  
respect for the traditional  
custodians of Australia and  
of their elders, both past  
and present.

## WARNING



The activities covered  
in this magazine are  
dangerous. Undertaking  
them without proper training,  
experience, skill, regard to  
safety and equipment could  
result in serious injury or death.

**Cover** *Ian scrambles  
towards another summit,  
Skippers Range.*  
Grant Dixon

**Contents** *Winter in Cradle  
Mountain NP.*  
Cameron Blake



"We are more often frightened than hurt; and we suffer more from imagination than from reality."

— LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA

## Stoicism and Perseverance

The Greek school of philosophy called Stoicism has evolved a long way since its birth in the Third Century BC. The concept of virtue is perhaps not as fashionable as it once was, yet people still fervently believe in determinism, regardless of how much scientific reductionism we're exposed to. Without diving into an historical or philosophical lesson, suffice it to say that, for the most part, we as a society like to think that hard work is sufficiently rewarded in some way, and that happiness can be achieved through some process of applied effort.

Whether this is strictly true in an objective sense can be discussed elsewhere. As I write this brief introduction to *Wild* 155 I can hear the Olympics playing out in the background, and if the rhetoric of each commentator, athlete and coach is true, then a modern application of Stoicism remains pervasive. This ethos is not something that's restricted to Olympic athletes, nor simply athletes more generally. A long distance runner's motivation to continue running may be the same driving force that keeps a bushwalker out in the wilderness, sometimes for days on end. Is this not the same kind of bloody-minded determination that is evidenced by someone who campaigns for a cause, even when others have ceased to support him or her? Examples of stoic behaviour, even if they're not consciously adhered to as part of a Stoic tradition, are intrinsic to Australian culture (and all other cultures, for that matter).

While Seneca (AKA, the Younger), who I've quoted above, wasn't the founder of Stoicism, he is perhaps one of the more

prolific proponents of the ethos, producing a huge body of work related to it. What this quote (among many others of Seneca's) highlights to me is the nature of our humanity: we are restricted more by ourselves than by any outside forces. While it may sound trite, I do believe that most hurdles can be overcome once we find the confidence in ourselves to overcome them. In reality this may not always be true, but at least in thinking so we allow for the possibility for it to be so.

It's these themes of determination and willpower I hope this issue of *Wild* highlights to you. And for a magazine that's been in print for over 35 years I think it's doubly applicable.

I continue to receive the occasional letter from subscribers, some of whom have been reading *Wild* for 20 years or more. I also know that there are those of you who have been reading since the very earliest years, and it's this kind of dedication to a concept – in doing something for its own reward – that I would highlight in this issue, and I thank you for it.

For each of us, life is often a case of simply putting one foot in front of the other in the hope that one day we'll have covered a great distance. Almost ironically, it's in the quality of the time spent, not the distance covered where we find joy.

Campbell Phillips  
Editor

# Wild

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Issue 154, Jul-Aug 2016

## LETTER OF THE ISSUE

**Toby wins a Platypus Duthie 12 valued at \$239.95. This pack is designed with bike riders in mind, but will also fill the role of daypack for most bushwalkers. The lightweight construction incorporates an external stuff pocket, hip pockets and integrated hydration.**



## BAD MEDICINE

I was disappointed to read your article on Lyme disease in the most recent edition of *Wild*. I have always respected *Wild* as a science based, reasonable magazine – obviously with an outdoor and ecological bent. *Wild* should be extremely cautious about publishing pseudo-medical advice. People assume these articles are based in good evidence, and can spend a lot of time and money seeking futile health care.

*The Meyer family maintain morale on a winter's hike on the Overland.*  
Photo: Anton Meyer



The contents of the article is at odds with significant research conducted in Australia and expert opinion, which holds that there is no locally acquired Lyme disease in Australia. People are recommended to visit 'Lyme-aware practitioners' – I would recommend people visit health care practitioners who practice evidence based, patient centered medicine. It is detrimental for anyone to seek a particular diagnosis, as if you ask enough people (including doctors) any question, eventually you will find one who agrees with you. Medical practitioners have no agenda about Lyme disease. Many of the conditions listed as 'mimics' of Lyme disease are common, serious and need to be treated. Ignoring these diagnoses while trying to get a diagnosis of Lyme disease may result in serious illness. I was particularly concerned about the dismissive tone taken toward mental illness in the article (despite Mr Robey working in the field). Symptoms caused by a 'neurotic' or 'psychosomatic' illness are real, important and should be treated. Treatment of these symptoms depends on identifying their cause, and trying to treat Lyme disease instead of a person's has depression will not help. There is no scientific basis for treating Lyme disease with supplements and lifestyle change as suggested in the article (though eating better and exercising more is good for everyone). The proposition that people infected overseas cannot access treatment in Australia is simply untrue – the Australian

Guideline directs practitioners to use the American treatment guideline. It is also worth noting the Mr Robey is not 'a registered health care practitioner' under Australian law (the register can be searched at [www.alpra.gov.au](http://www.alpra.gov.au)). This means he is not bound a professional codes and can write whatever he likes. I hope that *Wild* returns to it's core business of outdoor adventure (with a smattering of environmentalism) and will no longer publish questionable medical information that has the potential to cause real harm to unwell people.

**Toby Brunckhorst  
Toowoomba, QLD**

## OVERLAND TOTS

"We should do the Overland Track again," my wife said one day.  
"What about the kids?"  
"We'll take them as well."  
"When?" I ask.  
"July... winter," comes the response. I am a bit concerned because I know that look. It means we are taking four kids under age 11 on the track and in winter. Being a pretty experienced bushwalking family it was to be our biggest trip. As most know there was a lot of planning, training and organising. As luck would have it, we got fantastic weather for the first three days before it started to turn. By the end of the track it was getting worse, but we had made it. There were no major disasters. The winter hadn't ended. It wasn't all easy for the kids and us though. What takes a normal person three hours takes us five, as we walk to the speed of a five-year-old girl. The first day to Waterfall Valley and the big day across Pelion gap were the toughest for all. We had planned for these days and left extra early to ensure we had time. Still they took longer than we hoped but we got to the huts before dark. People seemed genuinely surprised to see what seemed like a primary school group out walking in the middle of the track. They all were very encouraging and the kids fitted in quite well. I still remember hearing someone as they went past us on Pine Moors go 'wow'. Were they referring to the awesome views or to the four kids in tow? I'll never know. So don't underestimate your children. Get them out there to explore and experience the outdoors. They are far tougher and resilient than you think. Plus they have way more energy than their parents.

**Anton Meyer  
Warragul, VIC**

## ICE PARASITE

I was interested to read the article by Alexander Robey about ticks and Lyme



## CORRECTION

In the last issue of Wild, a brief review of the Helsport Reinsfjell 2 hiking tent was given on page 73. It was incorrectly stated that this tent is a three-season tent. It should be noted that this version of the tent is in fact a four-season tent (while there is a superlight three-season version available, it was not the one reviewed). This was an editorial error that was not rectified during the proofing process. Wild apologises for any resulting confusion.



[www.wild.com.au/magazine/features/gilberts-potoroo-last-stronghold](http://www.wild.com.au/magazine/features/gilberts-potoroo-last-stronghold).

disease. There was recently a very good story on the ABC's Catalyst program about this very subject and it recommended a new method to kill and remove ticks: [www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4177191](http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/4177191). htm. The medical professionals interviewed on Catalyst suggested that you should kill large ticks first by using a product to rapidly freeze it, such as Wart-off or Medi Freeze skin tag remover. For small nymphs, a cream containing permethrin, such as Lyleclear, was recommended.

**Janette Asche**  
Indooroopilly, QLD

## BALANCING THE SCALES

Whether its recreational fishing, big game

## Wildflower season in Western Australia.

Credit: Brad Lester



"What a place to call your office at this time of year, hey Billy."



"Mulla mulla, daisies...they're all putting on a show."



"We've just got to make sure the romantic types don't pick 'em all!"

## THE WINNER: BUSHWALKING TIP

Bushwalking is hard on your bare hands and expensive, soft polartec gloves don't last long either, especially near a fire. I carry a pair of leather 'Riggers gloves'. They save your hands from splinters if collecting wood or pushing through prickly scrub and better still they protect your hands near the fire if quickly lifting something off it.

**Alex Keller**  
Terrey Hills, NSW

Alex wins a MSR MicroRocket stove valued at \$144.95. Weighing just 73g the compact, wind-resistant burner will boil 1L in 3.5 minutes and includes a handheld piezo lighter.



hunting or duck shooting, the prime purpose of these activities (and the main point about my letter) is about killing animals for the pleasure of it. Given that the scope of Wild magazine is about enjoying and preserving nature and the environment, I find it disturbing that a reader of Wild, not only participates in the gratuitous killing of

animals in the wild, but also actively aspires to promote this activity.

**Leigh Ackland**  
Deepdene, VIC

Readers' letters & tips are welcome and could win you a useful piece of outdoor kit. Write to Wild, 11-15 Buckhurst St, South Melbourne, VIC 3025 or email [wild@primecreative.com.au](mailto:wild@primecreative.com.au)

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# National conservation photo competition returns

Now in its third year, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is once again encouraging Australians to take place in its national photography competition, focusing on our country's natural landscapes and wildlife.

TNC is an international non-profit and one of the world's largest conservation-centric charities. The organisation produces targeted campaigns and projects that actively help restore the environment in many locations around the world.

As such, it's Australian-based photo competition acts as a critical outreach initiative that asks the public to engage with nature, celebrating the natural beauty with which we're endowed.

This year's competition includes categories such as landscape, water, wildlife and even a mobile phone-specific category. There's also a 'People's Choice' category, so that even non-entrants can participate.

For the other categories, winners will be selected by renowned nature photographers, Ben Goode, Esther Beaton and Michael Snedic.

"We are incredibly fortunate to have so many passionate amateur photographers in Australia," Beaton said.

"It will be exciting to be a judge in this year's competition and see other people's perceptions of nature through the lens."

Goode, who was also a winner in last year's

competition, told Wild that he's "really excited to be a part of a competition that promotes and showcases Australia's stunning landscapes and wildlife".

"I'm a big believer in keeping areas of natural beauty as unspoilt by humans as possible. It's one of the reasons I tend to gravitate towards landscape scenes that aren't on everyone's 'iconic list' and full of busloads of tourists."

And Goode has some advice for would-be entrants of TNC's 2016 photo comp, particularly those going after the landscape category.

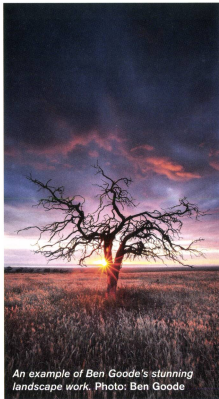
"Some advice I think is crucial for a professional landscape photographer is that you need to find your niche in a world that is crowded with imagery," Goode said. "Once you find your niche, work hard on it and aim to be among the best for this area."

TNC is offering \$5,000 in prizes to winners of the competition, with the winner receiving a two-night stay at Larwill Studio, high tea for two at Zumbo Café and entry to the Centre of Contemporary Photography.

The competition will be open for entry from the 26<sup>th</sup> of September until the 4<sup>th</sup> of November. Check the TNC Australia website for further details.



[natureaustralia.org.au](http://natureaustralia.org.au)



An example of Ben Goode's stunning landscape work. Photo: Ben Goode

# Walking El Camino for mental health

Three avid walkers have embarked on the renowned pilgrimage trail, El Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Europe in a bid to raise awareness for mental health and its impacts on individuals and families.

Cheryl McInnes, Kym Murphy and Tony Whyte set out on the 1 Million Steps for Mental Health initiative in late August, beginning their 884-kilometre walk in the French Pyrenees.



McInnes, Whyte and Murphy prepare for their journey. Photo: Supplied

It's not the first time the trio have walked El Camino, having first completed the walk in 2014. But it is the first time they've partnered with community mental health organisation MI Fellowship, now renamed as Wellways, to help raise money and awareness for those whose lives have been negatively impacted by mental illness.

"We each know, from personal experience in our own family, about the impacts of mental illness," said McInnes. "We also know what a difference the right kinds of support can make."

Murphy highlighted the fact that while they each harboured a "longing to walk the Camino again", they also realised it was best done for a cause that "would benefit the global community".

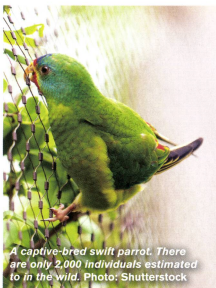
"We hope our Camino experience will inspire and help others understand mental health issues. We're ready to walk and make that happen," concluded Whyte.

The endeavour can be followed via the trio's blog, while those wishing to find out more or to donate should visit the MI Fellowship/Wellways website.



[www.travelpod.com/members/camino16](http://www.travelpod.com/members/camino16)  
[www.mifellowship.org/donate](http://www.mifellowship.org/donate)

# Swift parrots travel 1000km further in droughts



A captive-bred swift parrot. There are only 2,000 individuals estimated to be in the wild. Photo: Shutterstock

A recently published study reveals detailed insights into the behaviour of Tasmania's critically endangered swift parrots (*Lathamus discolor*), drawing on eight years of volunteer-collected data from BirdLife Australia.

The study, published in *Emu – Austral Ornithology*, found the parrot population migrates up to 1000 kilometres further north from their traditional Victorian wintering grounds to the coast of New South Wales in times of drought.

Lead researcher from Australian National University's Fenner School of Environment and Society, Dr Debbie Saunders said the findings highlight the need to protect a broad network of habitats across the birds' potential winter range in order to conserve the species.

"Every year the birds migrate north from Tasmania, and search far and wide across southeastern mainland Australia to find eucalypt nectar sources that will sustain them throughout

the winter," said Saunders.

While the birds were found to return to the same areas, it could be up to seven years between visits, with the birds selecting wintering sites based on weather and eucalypt flowering cycles. "So when Victoria has a prolonged drought, the birds are travelling up to 1000 kilometres on top of the hundreds of kilometres they have already travelled," she said.

"A number of regions across NSW are really important for the species. The central coast is the drought refuge habitat, and places like the Riverina are where birds go every year." Saunders and other researchers at ANU will combine the research with other conservation efforts as part of a \$1 million initiative from the NSW government to protect the state's swift parrot population.

It's expected the funding will also work to the benefit of a further 38 threatened species.

# Opportunity for Australian-made outdoor apparel

Got the knack for business and love the outdoors? Due to Australia's unique place in the world, there may be a niche opportunity for entrepreneurs looking to get into outdoor apparel manufacturing.

While many have come to regard the demise of Australian manufacturing as an inevitable result of globalisation, there remain opportunities for savvy entrepreneurs to cash in on. In fact, it's these opportunities – among others – that prime minister Malcolm Turnbull recently sought to promote in lionising an 'ideas boom' that would replace our waning mining boom.

Toward the end of last year, Turnbull unveiled a package for investing into innovation and research in business, promising \$1.1 billion in grants and tax breaks for those who might consider investing in research and startup businesses. Of course, such a summary glosses over the all-important details of the announcement and since the whole election saga has heated up, elements within the technology and business communities have come to either question or rubbish the coalition's handling of the entire affair.

Nevertheless, there continues to be bipartisan support in stimulating Australia's more tech-forward businesses, including manufacturing. For Philip Endersbee, owner of outdoor apparel brand, Wilderness Wear, the promise of research grants that local manufacturers may gain access to are "quite a good incentive for people to have a go".

Wilderness Wear, which predominantly specialises in Merino-based apparel, has managed to maintain its manufacturing base in Australia

while many others in similar categories have moved offshore. In a sense, a shrinking manufacturing base has helped support the remainder, with no shortage of skilled workers to choose from.

"The market is going to continue to have skilled operators coming out of the car industry and other related fields – they're talking about some 200,000 people," Endersbee said. "Anyone willing to take a calculated risk and start a business that employs these people could do quite well."

"There's no doubt that startup capital costs for getting into the local manufacturing is a bit of an impediment, but one of the things that we do have here are skilled technicians and on a global basis, I would say, competitively priced, skilled technicians."

So, there's an argument to be made for innovative manufacturing in Australia, but what about identifying a market for the resulting products? In the case of outdoor gear and apparel, the deputy head of Industry Engagement at RMIT's School of Fashion and Textiles, Kiri Dally, believes would-be entrepreneurs should consider the specialised, higher end of the market.

"There are consumers that think a five-dollar pair of jeans is a bargain and who aren't that concerned with how those jeans were made, or by whom. Then there are those that do want to know the story behind the product and are keen on transparency. And there are also those who research and are keen to purchase the best product for their specific needs and are willing to pay for it. As long as the customer understands

the reasons behind the prices being charged, such as the fabric benefits, fit, comfort, performance and other innovative features.

"Businesses that can offer short and quick runs, customisation and special solutions to meet end user needs will have great opportunities. And with export markets now growing in Asia, Australia's not so far away as to be unable to provide competitive product."

It is this very concept of niche manufacturing that has some traditional business owners scratching their heads, as manufacturing is traditionally only profitable at a certain production scale. While this is a problem any new outdoor apparel manufacturers may face, neither Dally nor Endersbee see it as insurmountable.

"Catering for niches may seem like reducing the market opportunity, but this is the direction many brands are taking," Dally said. "They may cater for multiple audiences, but they will still have a specific target customer in mind so as to ensure they stay on-brand and the customer can understand what they're about." Endersbee, who has experience working with police, fire and defense services highlights the fact that the trend in uniforms today is "to be virtually capable of offering off-the-shelf, tailor-made outfits".

"So the idea of being able to do short runs and offer something a little bespoke is certainly the go. And for that kind of service people are certainly willing to pay a premium because you're not going to have someone in an unusual size waiting up to six weeks for their technical (OH&S) corporate clothing."

This article originally appeared on [wild.com.au](http://wild.com.au) in July. If you have news for us, please don't hesitate to send us an email via [wild@primecreative.com.au](mailto:wild@primecreative.com.au).

## Explorer to present on future of winter sports



Nat Segal skiing above a remote fjord in Iceland. Photo: K.T. Miller

In March 2014, Australian skier Nat Segal set sail from Ísafjörður, Iceland with a small group dedicated to catalogue the effects of climate change on the Greenland ice sheet.

The group of six women were all experienced backcountry skiers and were supported by the skipper and first mate of the sixty foot schooner, *La Louise*. As luck would have it, they arrived in Greenland at a time that allowed them access to areas that none before had explored on skis.

"The Shifting Ice and Changing Tides expedition aimed to demonstrate how adventurous activities can be taken without modes of transport that harm the environment," Nat Segal told Wild.

The result is an inspiring documentary that debuted last year and has continued to prove popular at a number of adventure film festivals since then. "We had an amazing response to the film and we hope it generally inspires people to get out and experience life in the wilderness. I strongly believe that's the first step to any conservation initiative.

"The next step is to ask people to consider ways they can perform their adventures in a way that minimises their carbon footprint."

Beyond the adventurous nature of the Shifting Ice and Changing Tides expedition, Segal and her compatriots also undertook scientific research on water quality and microplastics, adding to the data of several critical studies. Organised by Cam Walker and Friends of the Earth Australia, Segal will be presenting on her experiences and thoughts relating to the future of winter sports in a time of climate change in Melbourne.

This free event is to be held at the University of Melbourne on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October.



[melbourne.foe.org.au](http://melbourne.foe.org.au)

**The Lea Extreme Race, TAS, September 24**  
The renowned Lea Extreme Race will be again hosted by the Tasmanian Canoe Club. The race features teams of 2 paddlers competing a time trial down class four rapids. [tcc.canoe.org.au](http://tcc.canoe.org.au)

**Great Everest Debate, September 24**  
Adventurers and documentarians debate the legitimacy of continuing to climb Mt Everest in the modern day. [www.joesbasecamp.au](http://www.joesbasecamp.au)

**The Nature Conservancy Australia's Photo Competition, September 26**  
TNC's nature photography competition opens for the third year running. Entries close November 4. [www.natureaustralia.org.au](http://www.natureaustralia.org.au)

**The Future of Our Sport in a Time of Climate Change, VIC, October 7**

Nat Segal will present on the future of ski touring and other sports based upon her experience witnessing the impacts of climate change first hand. [www.melbourne.foe.org.au](http://www.melbourne.foe.org.au)

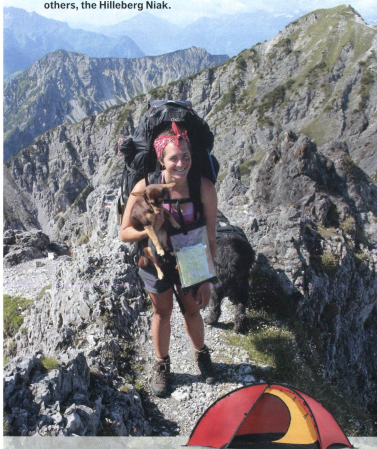
**Reel Paddling Film Festival, VIC, October 8**  
The Australian debut of this world-class paddling film fest lands at the Orley Shire Hall, with visitors encouraged to make a weekend of the event fishing, skiing and paddling in the area. [www.necanoeclub.canoe.org.au](http://www.necanoeclub.canoe.org.au)

**Sydney Coastrek Entries Open, September 1**  
Sydney Coastrek registrations open. The walking event has a 30km and 60km option, taking place on March 17. All entrants raise money for Fred Hollows Foundation. [www.coastrek.com.au](http://www.coastrek.com.au)

## I choose Hilleberg tents.

### Lina Hallebratt

Swedish female adventurer of the year 2015. Has hiked multiple 500 to 1000+ km long distance paths in Europe. Completed all three Swedish "Bands" back to back: the White, skiing the entire 1300 km length of the Swedish mountain chain; the Blue, paddling the entire 2300 km Swedish coastline; and the Green, hiking the same 1300 km Swedish mountain chain. Uses, among others, the Hilleberg Niak.



"I TRY TO BE OUTDOORS as much as I can, which usually means 6 to 8 months of the year. I used my Niak for 151 days hiking 2700 km on the Via Alpina from Trieste, Italy, to Monaco. I also used it for my Green and Blue Band trips. It's extremely user-friendly and is stable in all weather! The Niak has very generous headroom for such a small tent, and I find it very roomy, so a small but big tent!"

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## Photographer portrait: Gilbert Romane

**Originally from Canada, adventure photographer Gilbert Romane is busy making a name for himself in Australian outdoor circles**

As a kid growing up in Canada with a family active in the outdoors, I got involved early with the local Scouts Canada group. This was run by a good family friend and I distinctively remember him having a 'slide night' once every year. This was a chance to show parents what the boys got up to during the past 12 months. Reliving the last year in life-size, projected images and sharing the trips with friends and family was something I really enjoyed. It's an experience that, to this current day, still makes me excited to share with my friends regardless of what the adventure is.

After completing school, the main focus of my life became competitive cycling. I still loved hiking, fly fishing and camping, but my passion was on the bike. But eventually my dreams to go pro eventually came to an end and all the outdoor activities came flooding back. I went on trips to Alaska and the Chilkoot Trail with my wife. The West Coast Trail, previous experienced as young boy, had to be repeated again at age 20.

Arriving in Australia saw us embarking on another adventure: riding tandem from Cairns to Sydney. It was character building. Now, after many years living here in Sydney, the mountains call stronger than ever and so too the need to explore them locally and abroad.

Beyond all of that, my education in terms of photography is not very extensive. I have a diploma in Information Technology but that wasn't for me. I have done a number of courses at the Australian Centre of Photography (ACP) and cannot recommend them highly enough. There is endless online training available now, you don't have to attend a traditional class like the Camera Craft, Lighting or Business classes I took at ACP; the important point is to never stop learning. New gear and new technologies expand what we can create in photography and if you ever start thinking "I know it all" then you might as well stop doing what you do. What's exciting about doing the same things over and over?

My main work, my 'staple' is event photography at outdoor extreme or endurance sports. My knowledge of cycling puts mountain bike racing most often in my viewfinder, but really if it's related to the outdoors, then I am interested. Running, multisport adventure races, rogaining, rock climbing, paragliding or split boards on a

backcountry main range are all key aspects of my work.

I think two things really stand out, maybe not as skills or talents, but definitely as things that make what I do easier. A love for the outdoors as well as my past experience as an athlete, which engenders the dedication to achieve my goal. Photography isn't something where you just grab the latest camera from your favourite brand and press the shutter button. You need to be determined and willing to go

**'THE IMPORTANT POINT IS TO NEVER STOP LEARNING.**

**NEW GEAR AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES EXPAND WHAT WE CAN CREATE IN PHOTOGRAPHY AND IF YOU EVER START THINKING "I KNOW IT ALL" THEN YOU MIGHT AS WELL STOP DOING WHAT YOU DO. WHAT'S EXCITING ABOUT DOING THE SAME THINGS OVER AND OVER?'**

the extra mile. I have been asked many times: "why photography, you have to compete against anyone who has a camera?" Suffice to say, I don't see it that way. Many people will go to the closest and easiest 'action spot' and no further. Or they might spend all day walking and produce no result due to weather or just bad light on the day – but these are excuses. You have to keep at it. Once you succeed at something it doesn't stop there, start looking style or technique to expand your skillset and knowledge. It's a never-ending path. It's great.

I tell people all the time that "I would rather shoot a nine-hour event carrying around a 10-15-kilo pack outdoors than ever shoot a wedding." It's not me, it's not what excites me and if I am not excited then I won't push for that extra bit. One-day outdoors, even if no images are a result, is better than any day shooting something you are not passionate about.

Of course, pursuing a life in the great outdoors isn't always easy or without grave risks. Many years ago I was taking the passenger ferry from Bellingham, Washington, up through the coastline of British Columbia towards Alaska, getting off in towns whenever I wanted to go hiking. One day I bumped into a hiker one day on the trail. It was a German guy and he was running down the trail towards me. To this

*Gilbert Romane recently visited Iceland and Canada to test gear such as the pictured Epoch tent from Mont Adventure Equipment. Photos: Gilbert Romane*

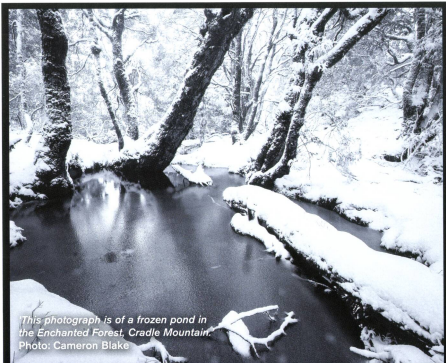


day I've have never seen anyone take such big strides. He stopped only for a minute to explain in his rough English he had just walked between a bear and her two cubs. Well, our bear bells didn't provide enough mental protection after that, so we turned around, opting to take another trail that day. In another example, two years ago I was heading down to Thredbo for a long weekend of shooting mountain biking and landscapes. A friend and I camped at the lookout of Australia's highest town, Cabramurra. It was December, the middle of summer. It was a little windy, but when we woke in the middle of the night to high winds and a couple of centimetres of snow, we couldn't believe it. We were totally unprepared for what the weather suddenly threw at us.

Then, there are also times that remind me exactly why I got into this line of work. Such as the time I was visiting Iceland with a fellow photographer and friend. We circumnavigated the island by car, but camped out in December (winter in the northern hemisphere) in a tent. This allowed us to be at locations longer and all throughout then night if need be. I remember the Aurora Borealis, we saw it on six evenings during that 23-day adventure and every night it got better. Some nights we stood in -17 degrees just staring at the sky. It's something I'll never forget.

It all comes down to not being afraid to try or do something different. I have met many people who want to go on an adventure, but the restrictions that we place on ourselves or society does stop us from doing many of these. I am guilty of it; everyone is. For many years I put things off as it would cost too much or I couldn't make money while away on the personal project. No doubt it's hard work, but everything if done properly or outside of the norm is. Unless you take a chance, you will never be truly happy, and never know what you can achieve.

A great book I am reading right now is *Grand Adventures* by Alastair Humphreys and it's all about exactly this concept. Changing your mindset and getting beyond obstacles that otherwise kill any opportunity for adventure. If you want to make a life of adventure a career, sometimes collaboration is the greatest way to grow; learn from those you partner with and share what you know to create better results, while also making friends for a lifetime.



*This photograph is of a frozen pond in the Enchanted Forest, Cradle Mountain.*  
Photo: Cameron Blake

## Endurance photography

**How far would you for to get that one, special photograph? Here, photographer Cameron Blake discusses the challenge for wild shutterbugs**

How far would you walk, run, hike or drive to get that one special photograph?

For some, the distance from home to photo shoot isn't too far at all – maybe to the end of the tourist track to a lookout, or maybe it's a hike up to the nearest peak, peering over the amazing vistas on offer. Going the distance can sometimes reward you with more than you'd ever expect.

As a wilderness photographer, part of the challenge is knowing how far you have to go to capture that one special image. This must also include thoughts about what conditions will be faced when seeking that one image. A great example was my recent trip up to my favourite part of Tasmania: Cradle Mountain. The weather outlook was for widespread, low-falling snow, with conditions varying between blizzard and snow showers. Perfect! It was the exact conditions I wanted to be able to capture a special spot I had planned for some weeks. Living in Hobart, this meant a four-hour drive to Cradle Mountain in testing conditions must first be overcome. I was faced with driving in a mixture of snow, ice and rain. After negotiating the drive, I was presented with a winter wonderland at Cradle Mountain. It was simply magnificent and I was excited to get started on my adventure.

To my disappointment, the roads into the National Park had closed just one hour before I arrived due to the extreme weather conditions. But I couldn't waste this

opportunity to explore the region.

I locked the car up and headed off on some of the more familiar tracks around the national park entrance. My original aim was to capture a frozen tarn on the east side of the Cradle Mountain summit, a three-hour hike in blizzard-like conditions. But, with access to the park restricted, I went to Plan B: capture some of the majestic waterfalls in the Cradle region.

I spent close to six hours in temperatures well below zero, walking the local trails and hunting the snow-covered waterfall scenes. The winter wonderland did not disappoint and what started as disappointment for not being able to hike to the frozen tarn ended up being one of my most memorable days in the snow. Every corner offered amazing, frozen landscape scenes.

I covered over 500 kilometres driving and well over 10 kilometres walking in just one day to capture some memorable images.

Award-winning landscape photographer Cameron Blake runs weekend workshops and six-day tours in Tasmania. His next tour departs for Cradle Mountain in November, 2016.



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## White butterfly orchid *Dendrobium dicuphum*

During a recent trip to the Top End, I was amazed by the seemingly endless variety of habitats, birds, reptiles, and butterflies. All familiar, but obviously different to a boy from the southern states. Whether it was eucalypts with orange flowers (*Eucalyptus miniatus*), ancient cycads (*Cycas armstrongii*), straggly native hibiscus shrubs (*Hibiscus menziesiae*), or leafless kapok trees (*Cochlospermum fraseri*) covered in showy yellow flowers, I knew I was 'through the botanical looking glass'. However, it was a delicate butterfly species that really caught my eye – the white butterfly orchid (*Dendrobium dicuphum*).

According to the Checklist of Orchids of Australia including its Island Territories, only 45 of our 1800 or so orchid species occur in the Northern Territory. The majority of these species flower during the wet season, requiring a boat and/or helicopter trip, or a risky misadventure of crocodile hopping, to reach them. So, I was pleasantly surprised to regularly spot white butterfly orchids flowering in both Litchfield and Kakadu National Parks, from the relative safety of dry land.

The white butterfly orchid is an epiphyte. That is, it grows in trees rather than on the ground. It has cylindrical stems (pseudobulbs) that are strongly ridged and have 2–10 leaves at the tip. These leaves are usually lost during the dry season each year. At the same time, the plant produces an arching spike of up to 20, large, showy, white flowers with a purplish centre. Annoyingly, the flowers tend to face upwards, rather than outwards, making it difficult to appreciate the lovely flowers unless they're viewed from above – no easy task when it lives in a tree.

It turns out that the white butterfly orchid is the most widespread orchid species in the Northern Territory, and it also occurs in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. Its broad distribution can be attributed, at least in part, to its occurrence on a variety of tree species in a range of habitats. Typical habitats include mangroves, monsoonal and littoral rainforest, and open savannah woodland, as well as stream bank vegetation and paperbark swamps, which is where I most commonly found it.

Fire is a common element of the savannah woodlands of the Top End during the dry season, with most patches being burnt on a two to four-year cycle. The white butterfly orchid is susceptible to being killed by fire; however, Top End fires are typically mild, trickling slowly through the understorey, leaving the eucalypt canopy, and epiphytic orchids, untouched.

There is some taxonomic doubt surrounding the white butterfly orchid. Very similar looking orchids occur in New Guinea, Timor and Seram, which are currently known as *Dendrobium affine*, but some taxonomists consider these two species to be the same entity.

Finally, the white butterfly orchid is known as "Djalamardi" by the indigenous community, and it's reported to have a wide range of traditional uses. For example, juice from the stems can be used to treat wounds and burns, as well as to

loosen a spear from a wound! The stems can also be eaten to cure coughs. In addition, the juice from crushed stems can be used as a fixative for ochres in bark and rock painting, while the colour extracted from stems can be used in body paint, and to decorate artefacts in ceremonies.



Flowers of the white butterfly orchid near Wangi Falls, Litchfield NP. Photo: Michael Duncan

Mike Duncan has had a 30-year passion for Australian native orchids, and currently provides scientific support to the Victorian Threatened Orchid Recovery Program



## Bob Brown's green living

**Bob Brown uses his downtime away from working on the Tarkine campaign to help draw attention to a looming threat in the Great Australian Bight**

The world's biggest oil rig is now waiting to be positioned by BP smack in the middle of the Great Australian Bight in October. At 100 metres by 75 and many stories high, with 100 people aboard, it is not liable to be turned back by the government.

The Great Australian Bight extends from the southern seaboard of Western Australia to South West Cape in Tasmania's Wilderness World Heritage Area and includes the Eyre Peninsula, Adelaide's beaches, Kangaroo and King Islands as well as the Tarkine Coast in northwest Tasmania. Yet perhaps the Bight's best-known land and seascape is the 60-metre-high cliffs where the serene Nullarbor Plain falls off into the sea.

The Bight has a myriad of rare, endangered and unknown creatures from zooplankton to the mightiest animals ever to move on Earth, Blue whales. Next only to the Blue whales in size are the Southern Right whales which come to the Bight to calve. Humpbacks also calve near the head of the Bight. There are also colonies of vulnerable seals along this coastline.

BP now adds this major new threat. Its oil rig follows up on the seismic (explosive) testing carried out in recent times in the search for oil and gas.

BP lost control of just such a rig in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010. Following that explosion, fire and huge oil spill which is an ongoing disaster for the Gulf's ecosystem the attempted cleanup has, so far, cost \$56 billion.

I asked an expert how BP will anchor in such a remote wild tract of deep ocean. It can't. He presumes they will have a system of motors constantly keeping the rig in place. "What," I asked, "if a one-in-one-thousand-years storm hits the rig?" My expert had no good answer. Perhaps that is why the National Oil and Petroleum Environmental Management Authority has twice turned down BP's application to put its drill in place. NOPSEMA's reasons have been kept secret but BP's third attempt at reassuring the agency is now under assessment and, given limitless chances, BP should succeed. All Australians need to know what is at stake

here. The Wilderness Society's South Australian campaigner Peter Owen has maps showing where a Gulf-like oil spill would go: it would wash ashore right round the Bight as well as along the Bass Strait coasts of both Victoria and Tasmania.

Sea Shepherd Australia is sending its ship, *Steve Irwin*, to tour the Bight this month and I will be aboard. Our foundation is also aboard the Great Australian Bight Alliance of groups joining up to campaign for the Bight. Please join us, too.

PS – The climbers are back from Federation Peak (last Wild) having succeeded in climbing the 700-metre northwest blade in mid-winter. Watch out for the film!



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# TARKINE takayna makuminya TRAILS

PUBLISHED BY THE BOB BROWN FOUNDATION

Written by Phill Pullinger with a foreword by Bob Brown, this guide contains track notes and maps for 100 bushwalks, 10 mountain bike trails and 17 paddle trips.

It also includes over 100 beautiful images of this wild place taken by some of Tasmania's foremost landscape photographers.

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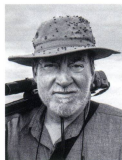


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Tree-hugging pride: Tony Sharley (centre left) leads the inaugural Murray River Walk team, in a group hug. Photos: Quentin Chester



## Hiking the icon

**Quentin Chester visits the mighty Murray, only to find himself reminded of the majesty of the river red gum**

Trees led us to ourselves and we stood against them trunk to trunk, arms upon branches, our thoughts tangled in the stars.'— Roger McDonald

In the early 1820s a handful of seeds were planted in Count Francesco Ricciardi Camaldoli's garden (*L'Hortus Camaldulensis di Napoli*) on the western outskirts of Naples. A decade or so later the seeds had sprouted into hefty eucalypts. In the spirit of all things taxonomic, the Count's gardener, German botanist Frederick Dehnhardt, set about describing these specimens. And so in 1832 Australia's greatest gum tree — our beloved river red — became known (science-wise) as *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*.

No one knows for sure why these trees ended up in a Neapolitan garden, though it's likely the seeds were sourced from another botanical bod, Charles Fraser, who explored west of the Great Divide with John Oxley in 1817. The dissemination didn't end there. Over the next 200 years this versatile species flourished in exile: with plantings everywhere from Nepal to Nigeria and Malta to Myanmar. Resilient and resourceful, they're masters of drought and flood, poor

soil and blistering heat. Yet for all this global success and the quirky Italian connections nothing matches the living miracle of *E. camaldulensis* in its homeland.

To traverse Australia is to behold the triumph of our big reds. They cast their patchy nets of shadow across rivers and floodplains in every mainland state.

To put it simply, these wonderful trees are just about everywhere. Not just that, but some of their brethren have been alive for centuries. In a few instances we're talking six or maybe even eight hundred years before Herr Dehnhardt did his sciencey thing. Appreciating age and ubiquity is all very well. But what's it like to be among these trees and wander for days in their midst? You get to sashay around these gums in red-rock gorges right across the Centre and beside billabongs in western Queensland. All through the outback they flank the laneways of dry, silty creekbeds to form towering guards of honour that mock that endless shrubby plains beyond. However, for the full *camaldulensis* cavalcade you have to head south and east.

It's fitting that the heartland for our all-

conquering river reds is the mightiest waterway in the land. The most legendary stronghold of all is the Barmah Forest, a 65,000-hectare swathe of 40-metre-high gums marshalled on Victoria's northern border. Yet significant stands form a procession all along the 3,672km meander of the Murray-Darling. Head west and just across the border west into South Australia there's the Calperum/Chowilla floodplain where a labyrinth of wooded creeks and backwaters splays out north of the main river.

This is the unlikely setting for one man's dream of turning the Murray into a walking destination. Born and bred in the Riverland, Tony Sharley is a fast-striding encyclopedia of waterways. He's spent a lifetime working on wetland projects. Not just that but he's at ease barrelling through the bush, with a swift eye for plants and birdlife. Most of all Tony fathoms the changes the river's been put through. We're talking about the multi-decade cycle of dry spells and inundations that powers the ecology of the nation's most iconic eucalypt.

It's probably fair to say that you asked

most people to name Australia's top 100 bushwalking spots, the banks of the River Murray wouldn't make the list. (By the way, in SA it's usually abbreviated as 'the River'. Life can be that simple when you've only got one worthy of the title.) Anyway, for decades Chowilla has always been a place to explore with canoes and well-stocked eskies - not walking boots.

The challenge for overland travel here was always logistics. So much broken up landscape with too many creek and river crossings. Tony's solution is to come up with a guided itinerary where you walk by day and meet your comfy houseboat at a new destination each night. It sounds straightforward but the walking route is intricately crafted to weave between the river proper, open woodland and secluded backwaters. The other secret to this toing and froing is a fleet of smaller craft - canoes and a nippy, canopied cruiser - that help the walking party cross creeks and explore the slenderest of channels.

Though billed as the Murray River Walk, the main corridor of the river only occasionally takes centre stage. And, the width of this channel means it can be hard to read what's happening on the opposite bank. From afar it's often just an expanse of murky water with a distant parade of vegetation. No, the real gift this walk unwraps every day is the river's hinterland.

As bushwalking prizes go it's hardly conventional. There are no high-flying peaks or valleys on the menu. On the first morning we're led into a drift of low scrub and woodland on Reny Island. The riverside red gums and ankle-snagging lignam thickets give way to silty, samphire channels edged with coobarr, the local acacia. Further inland we follow the shift to higher, drier ground. It's leaner up here with the silvery green of the saltbush and the scattered stands of black box.

Even in early winter the bleaching hardness of a long Riverland summer is still apparent. Out on the plains there's only the faintest fuzz of new green growth underfoot. At eye-level it's often a grey-on-grey show. Yet here and there among the pale tangle of leaves and dry and dead timber we spot a squirt of colour as a yellow rosella flits past or a red-capped robin perches nearby. And, as always on this outing, we're never far from water. The broad lagoons hold glinting reflections of blue, cloud-streaked skies. Snuffling in the shallows of creeks and lagoons we're met by black swans, wood ducks and the out-stretched wings of darters who squat ever-watchful on branches close to the water's edge.

By day two we're well into the rhythm of the place. As walks go it's a lolling ramble over gentle ground. Here the biggest

obstacles are the occasional fallen log or the sudden slick patches of damp clay. Mostly you're free to tune into textures and sensations. In reality the walk is never far from the patchwork of farms, vineyards and orchards surrounding the big river town of Renmark, yet the experience of being sunk deep in this backcountry bush is mesmeric.

Late in the morning the route brings us back to the main river. It's at this point that the buffering power of the forest is almost overwhelming. The thoroughfare that is the Murray, even with all its history and echoes of human striving, is just no match for the tall trees. The outside world is eclipsed by this stand of river reds. They are colossi with trunks like bridge pylons. Stood at their base and cranking our heads back to gaze at the leafy canopies on high it feels like nothing less than being swallowed whole.

From this moment on the walk becomes for me a red gum reverie. All afternoon we track along Big Hunchee Creek, another side branch that loops into Chowilla country. E. camaldulensis frames our every step. Across the river the floodplain is a sprawl of red gums young and old. Even in their twilight years the trees are vivacious. Their ancient bulbous trunks, marbled in shades of olive green and grey are still yet works in progress.

Writer Roger McDonald is tuned into this vigorous decline: "Trees clung to life and kept thrusting out growth to the end... It was a process of dying down, refining dying as growth, that may have taken centuries after the tree had reached its prime - ensuring that trees stood ever beyond us even as they sheltered and warmed us."

Late in the day we re-join the houseboat and sit on the riverside with a glowing red gum fire. The last of the light filters through the tree tops. Long leafy shadows arch across the river and cries of whistling kites slice through the calm of dusk. Around the fire the talk is about the day's bird spotting: mobs of spoonbills scything among the shallows; flocks of pelicans lined up on half-

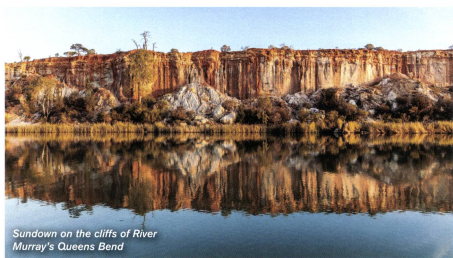
submerged logs mid-stream; the scrub wrens, finches, ring-necked parrots and many more.

As the conversation burbles along my thoughts keep circling back to the red gums and the vision of the old stagers, some centuries-young, still pumping with life. Through the day we witnessed grand specimens still bearing the scars of bark canoes carved from the trunks so many generations before. We had seen massed saplings while sat upon their fallen ancestors. Step by step we shared a consciousness of these gums working with the river as the great providers. And a line from the poet Rainer Maria Rilke kept rolling in my head: "Longing to grow, I looked outside myself, and the tree inside me grew."

On the final walking day we leave the water's edge and veer east to skirt the elevated escarpment country near Queens Bend. More than just an expansive view, it's a vision of what was so nearly lost. The walk takes in the site of a proposed dam wall that would have extended for 5.5 kilometres to block the Murray and adjacent creeks. In the 1960s the much-vaunted Chowilla Dam threatened to inundate 1400 square kilometres of river floodplain spilling across three states. Mercifully the plan was finally abandoned in the early 70s, saving an entire ecosystem from certain disaster.

Standing atop the rust-red cliffs overlooking Queens Bend we honour the saving of this vast sweep of river and its many million trees and all the life they bring. The walk ends with us plunging down a deep sandy gully to a reunion with the birds and forest hugging the water's edge. We celebrate with one last campfire and much later we drift off to our houseboat beds. Smelling of eucalyptus smoke, I ease into a dreamy sleep while our little floating world is tucked against the bank, the mooring lines wrapped tight around two big river reds.

"Longing to grow, I looked outside myself, and the tree inside me grew" - Rainer Maria Rilke. W



Sundown on the cliffs of River Murray's Queens Bend

# Enter the SNOWMAN

Sometimes overlooked in favour of more famous Himalayan destinations, *Julian Ledger* finds Bhutan as fulfilling a trekking locale as any of its neighbouring countries



*The Snowman lives up to its name.*  
Photo: Mike Cocker



*The big skies of Bhutan.*  
Photo: Mark Hills



Our guide, Namgay, had promised us a long day and sure enough by mid-afternoon I'm struggling. This is a result of the combination of altitude, a difficult trail and having sweated so much on the steep climb up. We had stopped for a long lunch break at the only flat spot, but since then the pace has been unrelenting. There are many small descents built into the overall ascent and the footing is eroded and mostly very rocky, requiring concentration in foot placement.

The climb up the north side of the valley has been precipitous and scenic. As we've slowly got higher the vegetation has changed from the heavy forest canopy in the lower gorge, through to smaller trees and then sparser vegetation, until now at 4,000 metres we've reached the tree line. In contrast to the ravine below, we emerge into a flat and broad valley. Crossing a bridge over the torrent we can see a herder's hut in the distance that will be our home for the night.

I'm on the 12th day of the Snowman Trek – about halfway through. It is claimed there have been more summiteers of Everest than people who have finished this trek and it is reputed to be one of the hardest. Only half of those who start successfully complete. But is that advertising hype or a fair description? In numbers, we are talking about 350 kilometres over 25 days, ascending to 11 passes over 4,500 metres above sea level and five of these are over 5,000 metres.

#### YAKS WITH ATTITUDE

It's the first day with yaks carrying our gear. At altitude they go better than ponies and are tougher in snowy conditions. Trouble is that a couple of days ago this lot were grazing free on the mountainside and now they are reluctant beasts of burden carrying loads of camping gear and personal effects along narrow trails. They do so at their own pace and, weighing in at up to 500 kilograms each, are not to be trifled with when the track is exposed to big drops. It is my first trek not carrying my own gear – but I think I could get used to this quickly.

Bhutan is a mountainous country sandwiched between the world's two most populous nations – India and China (Tibet). Famously isolated in the past due in particular to the difficulty of travel. Even today there are few roads, a single tiny airport at Paro and a handful of international flights. The population is less than a million. Where we are trekking the boundary between Bhutan and Tibet is disputed and Google Earth shows two options. Things are testy with China but that does not stop goods being traded in both directions by pack animals over the high passes. Via these historic routes came Tibetan invasions, but today the shared Buddhist heritage and culture brings mutual sympathy. Bhutan's foreign policy is aligned with India.

In September and October there is a trekking window of about six weeks

between the end of the monsoon and the onset of winter which heralds the closure of the passes. As it turns out, in 2015 we nailed it. Every high pass is clear and we are treated to huge, clear views. It gets very cold and there is some snow, but the rain jackets hardly ever come out.

The yaks arrive just after darkness falls and despite a black, moonless evening the tents are erected quickly and belongings reunited. Three hot drinks followed by a meal make a big difference and there's a general sense of wellbeing around the table – the only night on the trek we were not in the dining tent. In bed shortly after 8pm – our daily walking starts at 7.30am – and sleep well on a good flat campsite.

In the morning we have a sharp climb of about 300 metres that takes us into a hanging valley leading to Tsomé La pass at 4900 metres.

Rosie, one of two vets in the group, gets seriously cold hands and we do not warm up until, cresting the top of our first climb, we reach the warming rays of the sun. The route up to the pass through scree and moraine is not hard and we get there by late morning. Rosie and her Uni friend, Kate, have treated a footsore pony as well as a herder whose head was gashed after being kicked by one of the more bad-tempered animals. Rosie is an inspiration – an experienced ski mountaineer, she has had not one but two hip replacements and is a strong climber in the group.



## THE WAY TO THE REMOTE LUNANA REGION

These three days are at the crux of the trek, with high passes leading to the remote Lunana region. For Namgay and the trekking crew of seven it is also the key challenge. Once over we are committed – the way out is onwards for another ten days. There are no roads, no airstrips and the country of Bhutan owns no helicopters – the only possible emergency evacuation option is to call in the Indian army.

The route now crosses a high, barren plateau. We stop on a spur below the track for another amazing lunch stop with great views and then on a long but steady contouring climb to the night's camp at Narehang. We are below the glaciated west face of Gangla Karchung, a 6,400-metre peak to be skirted to the north. The elderly yak herder indicates that when he was young the glacier reached way down the valley. Now there is only an empty gorge bounded by huge moraine walls. A small avalanche comes off above us with snow streaming down a gully.

One of the features of the trek is digital detox as we go beyond the reach of modern technology. These things will arrive in the region and no doubt will change lives for the better, but for us it is a precious escape.

After dinner each night, one of us takes the floor to tell a tale on any topic we like and much fun is had. Namgay is the

superstar, on his tenth Snowman Trek in as many years he knows the trail intimately. An erudite man, he enlightens and entertains us constantly with stories of Bhutan and Buddhism and how the people live.

The sloping campsite means a night of sliding down the Therm-a-Rest. I try a system of cords to arrest the sleeping bag at the top of the tent with me in it but it's only partially successful. There must be a design innovation opportunity here. We have read that if you roll a rock down the south side of the Himalaya then where it stops is where Bhutan ends. Sounds plausible, as flat ground on the trek is at a premium and, as campers, we have come to appreciate level places.

Later it gets damn cold and, due to the high camp, I sleep poorly. A chart on my Bhutan map says we have 53 per cent of the oxygen normally available at sea level. As a low-living Aussie I'm glad that I invested in new, warm gear – both down jacket and sleeping bag are 800 loft and the bag rated to -11. Combined with a merino base layer of clothing it's adequate. I've brought four hats for different sun intensity and temperatures given that a quarter of all heat loss occurs via the head. Tonight is a balaclava night.

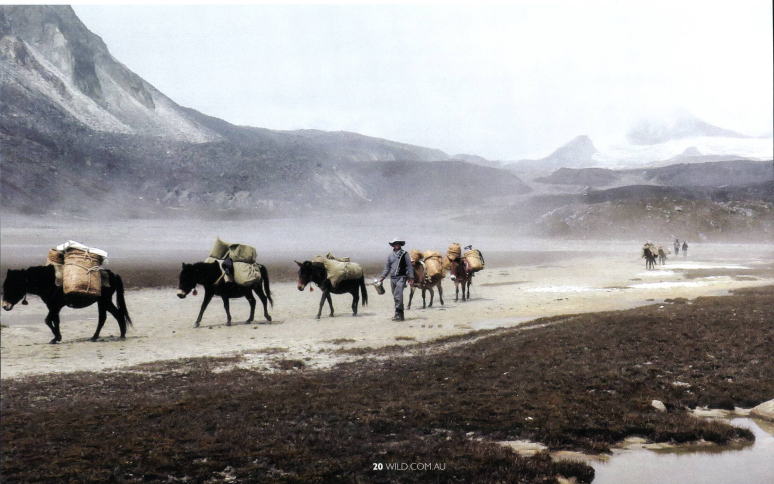
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We wake to heavy frost and an early morning ascent to Karakachu Pass at altitude 5,080 metres. As the highest pass so far it's tough on dry throats. Over the first week

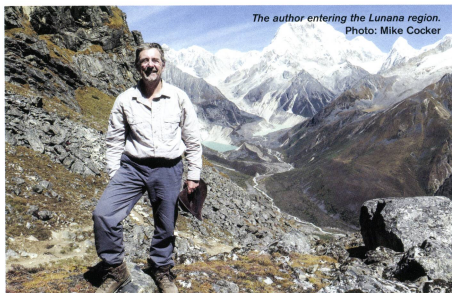
we took our time acclimatizing, going up no more than 500 metres per day and using the mantra of 'walk high and sleep low'. The first ascent to 4,750 metres was lung busting, but this is an experienced group, with almost everyone having been over 5000 metres before and some over 6000. People are both fit and have the right mental attitude for 25 days in a remote area.

The tour company, KE Adventure, had asked for experience and vetted participants carefully. "Ok Mr. Ledger, it is of interest that you did the Everest Trek when you were aged 23, but what have you done in the last three years?" My training regime included completing fun runs such as Sydney's City to Surf, a number of six and 12-hour rogaines and some long day walks in the UK's Lake District. I also took the precaution of taking finger-tingling Diamox for the first few days, which may have helped me to acclimatise well.

The pass summit is adorned with Tibetan prayer flags and is exhilarating and blowy. We all rug up quickly. Unlike some other passes there is no chorten for shelter. There is a stupendous view back to 7000-metre peaks we have passed – Chomolhari, Jitsu Drake and Kang Che Da. The pass is little more than a notch with a very steep descent on the other side.

After shouts of "Hapgolla!" we scramble down into a couloir with a small glacier to the right and shallow lake to the left. The trail eases off and then climbs a spur, which





The author entering the Lunana region.  
Photo: Mike Cocker

then opens up onto a stunning mountain panorama. Cameras are clicking as we enter the Lunana region.

We descend over a thousand metres. The view across the beautiful uninhabited valley is with us all the way and changes as we lose height. The first vegetation is dwarf rhododendron, which quickly grows into a forest. Our subsequent lunch stop at a flat meadow by the river is a godsend for sore knees and shins.

Later at the campsite, two yaks have gone AWOL reportedly having crossed the torrent without authority en route. It is Julie from Germany and I who have struck the yaks

with attitude and we wait and wonder what happens if our possessions are on their way downstream to the Bay of Bengal. Eventually they turn up and we are able to turn in. After this incident I take the precaution of carrying a few more warm clothes in the daypack – just in case.

The next day's walk is lower and easier with no high pass. The variety of vegetation types, the rock formations, the flora and fauna and the scenery makes every day interesting. Today we arrive at the village of Woche as the women are threshing barley. There is a reason the few villages are perched on mountainsides as every so often

## GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS

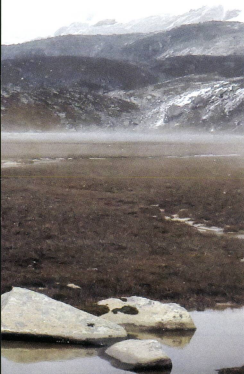
To paraphrase Lonely Planet - Gross National Happiness (GNH) has become Bhutan's philosophical banner and a gift to a world grappling with materialistic 'growth economics'. Based on core Buddhist and human values, this measurable index is a counterpoint to the economist's Gross National Product. It is also a philosophy that places real value on things such as cultural heritage, health, education, good governance, ecological diversity and individual wellbeing. Importantly, it sees economic growth not as an end but rather as a means of achieving more important ends.

More specifically there are four pillars:

- Good governance (the king relinquished being the absolute monarch in 2008 and now Bhutan is a fledgling parliamentary democracy)
- Sustainable socio economic development
- Preservation and promotion of culture
- Environmental conservation

The four pillars are then elaborated into nine domains. Practical outcomes include working to provide equity of access to health and education and to promote community vitality.

At 5000m, Rinchen Zoe is the highest pass (pictured in distance). Photo: Mike Cocker



glacial lakes at the head of the valleys burst their moraine wall and an icy torrent surges downstream engulfing all before it on the valley floor.

Being invited to have a go at threshing is an opportunity to experience something of local culture and ranks with earlier in the trek when with three schoolteachers in our group we joined mountain primary schoolchildren in class. Also before the trek, we attended two days of the remarkable Thimphu Tshechu – an annual religious festival of dancing and fun at the main Zhong. In one village, some try 'yartsa goenbub', a mummified caterpillar fungus found at around 4,000 metres and known as the Himalayan viagra. A very small quantity of this stuff sells for an eye watering \$25,000 per kilo in China!

Two days beyond Woche and we reached the head of the Lunana Valley, earning our third rest day underneath flat-topped Table Mountain. Beyond and out of sight is the highest unclimbed peak in the world, Gangbar Puensum (the Bhutanese barred climbing the 6,000-metre-plus peaks some years ago). There is even a makeshift warm shower and the opportunity to wash

clothes – personal wellbeing is important for body and soul.

From here we turn south for the final third of the trek, where we crest the highest pass through fresh snow. The country gets even more rugged, expansive and remote. No vegetation for days and no village for a week. There are more long days, and a few tumbles, but spirits remain high and we finish in good shape. We have eaten well with three cooked meals per day, meat or eggs for protein, chillies for warmth and, for most of the time, fresh fruit and vegetables. Despite this, average weight loss is five-to-six kilos – no doubt helped by lack of alcohol. At the end, according to the Garmin, we have done 13,500 metres of ascent and descent.

.....  
We've been privileged with the trip of a lifetime. We never do see a snow leopard, although we only just missed one when we stumbled upon the fresh remains of a blue sheep (bharal). We do see marmots, other small mammals, many birds of prey and spied a Tibetan wolf on a crag above.

Bhutan is not a budget traveller destination, not only must you travel with

a guide but there is also a minimum daily tariff which is effectively a tax on tourism of \$US65 per day. However there are no regrets and we feel that we have experienced Bhutan at a special juncture of its history.

The day before leaving, we climb with a mix of international tourists up to the must see Tiger's Nest Monastery. A place we can better appreciate with our new understanding of its religious significance not to mention its location and beauty.

On the short flight back to Kathmandu across the southern face of the Himalayas and there are great views of five of the mightiest peaks – Kanchenjunga, Makala, Lhotse, Everest and Cho Oyu. [W](#)

#### Further reading:

Bhutan – Lonely Planet

Bhutan: A Trekker's Guide – Bart Jordans

Beneath Blossom Rain: Discovering Bhutan on the

Toughest Trek in the World – Kevin Grange

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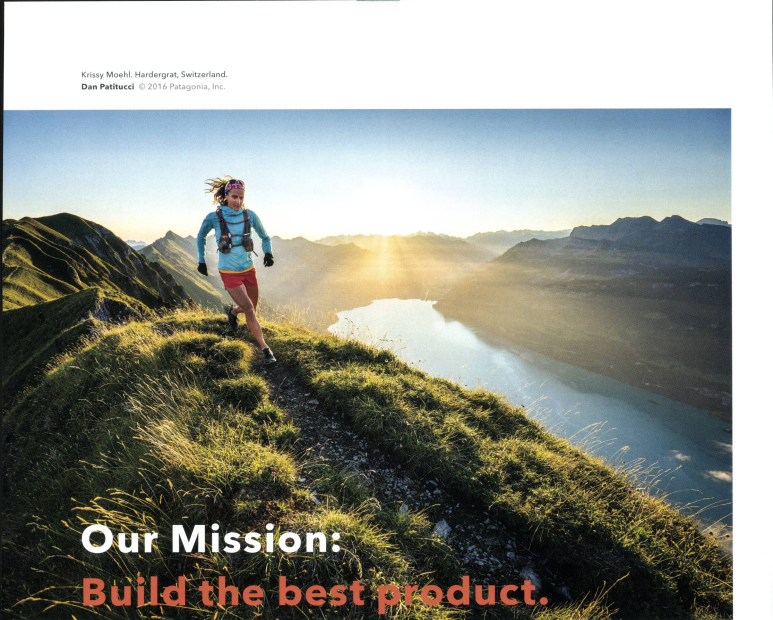
*Julian Ledger's last story for Wild was about the search for a missing Blue Mountains bushwalker. He heads up the YHA in Australia and when not doing that likes to go gaiming.*

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Welcome prayer flags at trek's end.  
Photo: Mike Cocker



Krissy Moehl, Hardergrat, Switzerland.  
Dan Patitucci © 2016 Patagonia, Inc.



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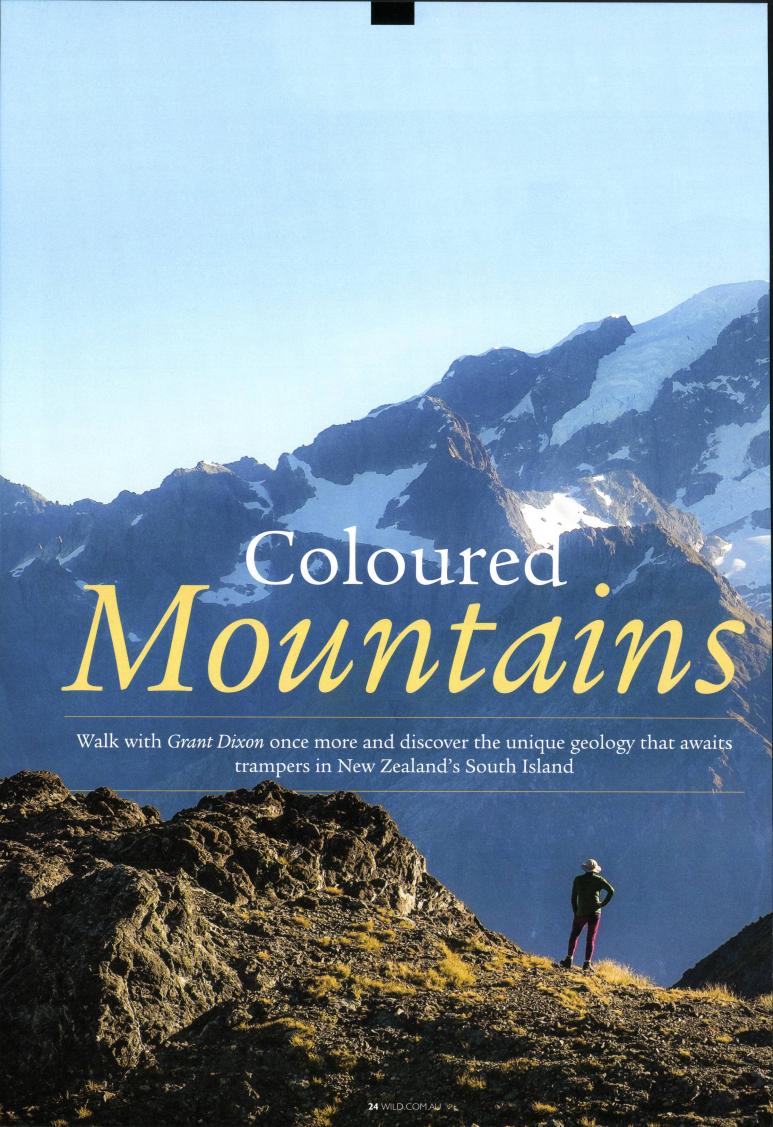
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A full-page photograph of a person standing on a rocky, sparsely vegetated ridge in the foreground, looking towards a range of large, rugged mountains in the background. The mountains are partially covered in snow and set against a clear blue sky. The title 'Coloured Mountains' is overlaid on the image.

# Coloured *Mountains*

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Walk with *Grant Dixon* once more and discover the unique geology that awaits trampers in New Zealand's South Island

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*High camp on Skippers Range, looking across  
Hollyford valley to Mt Tutoko (2723m),  
Fiordland's highest peak.  
Photos: Grant Dixon*

**I**n South Westland and northern Fiordland, in the south of New Zealand's South Island, lies a large tract of wild country with no roads and few tracks. It is accessed by a long gravel road south from the west coast highway in the north, and the Hollyford road, which branches from the Milford Sound tourist road to the south. Between lies a series of intriguing and little-visited parallel mountain ranges of quite varied character, a reflection of their differing bedrock geology. Rocks have been a lifelong interest for me, but the diversity and landscape expression here is of broader interest. There is a wide range of colouration in the exposed rocks, and the vegetation that cloaks the ranges provide additional variations, and all can present with great clarity in the well-washed air. This was the setting for a four-week traverse, undertaken mostly with my mate, Ian.

It was warm and humid on the gravel flats beside the Cascade River, perfect conditions to encourage a frenzy of activity among the local sandfly population, and we were their focus. Despite bare legs protected temporarily by overtrousers, we ate a hurried first lunch then commenced the 700-metre climb up a rocky stream and scree. As we gained height, the rocks at our feet became red, and some outcrops displayed contrasting black and brown compositional banding. The presence of these distinctive ultramafic rocks here, thrust from deep in the Earth's crust, is a reflection of the ongoing activity between two tectonic plates, something 'big picture' to reflect on as spits of rain drove us into the tent for the night.

The chemical composition of these rocks discourages vegetation growth, so their presence tends to be announced by

stark red-brown slopes. We hauled our packs up such a slope into cloud, which soon became rain. A grovel through scrub followed by a gully with tall tussock ensured we got soaked, then lack of visibility on the ridge above forced a camp mid-morning.

It was starry by the early hours and we had a clear sunny day for the long climb to Staircase Peak. The red boulder-strewn bulk of Mount Richards dominated the view to the south and presented an amazing contrast with green forest below and the yellow tussock grass in alpine basins nearby, as well as with the schist country of the Olivine Range to the east from which it is separated by a sharp geological fault.

Our ridge gave way to bare, ice-smoothed slabs, and then a short scramble to the small plateau-like summit of Staircase Peak. Lunch in the sun was a brief respite before a long afternoon, but gave time to admire the spire of Mount Aspiring towering over all else beyond the deep Arawhata valley to the east.

We now faced a complex and steep descent-and-side to gain the crest of the Olivine Range, before following the grey-green schist ridge to Tararua Peak. Energy levels were flagging notably as I dragged myself over the summit and descended to a basin below to camp among scattered boulders.

Signs of an imminent weather change were everywhere next morning, so we scampered (as much as possible) onwards along the sharp-edged ridge to aptly-named Bald Mountain. The dramatic views of Mount Aspiring to the east and tilted schist slabs of the Olivine Range to the south kept us company throughout, until finally swallowed (like us) by cloud. We felt our way west and down over various bumps until finding a semblance of

shelter in the lee of a low ridge. We had the tent up and had lunched on the grass before the heavy rain arrived. A little later, lying inside felt like reclining on a waterbed – a reassuring confirmation of the strong floor fabric.

A brightening sufficient to contemplate moving on eventuated after midday next day. A narrow ridge led onward, wet yellow tussock and green shrubbery glowing in the mist-filtered light, until a sudden change as we crossed the geological fault and started a steep climb over red ultramafic boulders. Mount Raddle's bleak summit was no place to linger in the conditions, so we picked our way steeply down to an exposed shelf beside a small tarn. Despite the superficial barrenness, the immediate surroundings formed a fascinating natural rock garden with an array of weathered rock types, from red and black ultramafics to green serpentinite, and twisted pink pine and other shrubs.

It was colder the next morning, with hail and snow showers plus frozen fingers making packing more protracted. A session of slippery rocks, wet scrub then swampy flats saw us at the Cascade River, now too high to cross. We camped again, the river flats steaming in later sunny breaks.

The river had dropped 30 centimetres next morning and we judged it OK to attempt a crossing, but the turbid, cold water flowing among boulders was still intimidating. The shady valley floor was no place to warm up afterwards, but the 1,000-metre climb onto the Red Hills straight from the riverbank certainly achieved that. Much of the climb was through beautiful mossy rainforest, assisted by deer trails in places. By the time we broke out of forest onto open



*Red ultramafic rocks with blue lakes in the barren basin below, at dawn, Red Hills*

grassy leads, the weather was again deteriorating. The rain increased in intensity by the time the tent was up within a sheltered copse, but not so much that it precluded an afternoon stroll (now well rugged-up) amongst the surrounding colours; sphagnum-fringed pools, yellow grassy openings, and lurid green moss carpeting both the forest floor and twisted trunks.

A clear dawn and light frost made for cold feet in wet boots as we squelched up onto the open tops, and also magnificent views across rolling snowgrass basins to the rugged Olivine Range to the east and bright blue Tasman Sea to the west. We had several hours of open, but sometimes tedious, tussock hopping before the sudden and dramatic change to the landscape for which the Red Hills are named. The basin below contained two

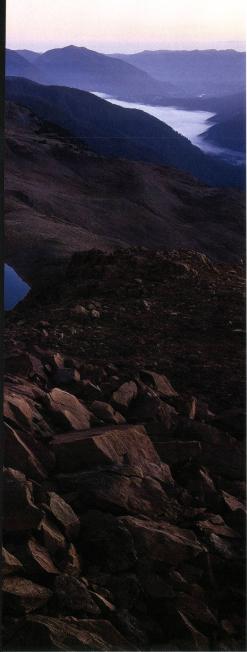
large lapis-coloured lakes contrasting starkly with the surrounding red and brown rock-strewn landscape with no sign of greenery, and with craggy Red Mountain towering beyond.

We started our scramble towards Red Mountain before dawn, hoping for sunrise views en route. Then, from the base of the mountain proper, it was a steep scramble, the raspy crystalline surface of the ultramafic boulders rough on bare hands, to the windswept wind 1,705-metre summit. The glacier-draped peak of Mount Tutoko now dominated views to the south, beyond Skippers Range, our next destination. Returning to camp, we descended westwards into a scenic and slightly more sheltered tussock basin to camp, and from where the sunset light made the red and yellow landscape even more stunning.

The two-day fine spell had been perfectly timed for our traverse of Red Hills, but the overcast northerly conditions next morning warned of another imminent change. We followed a narrow winding spur up and down, part in forest, part open and grassy, until the Pyke valley appeared far below, camping early near the tree line as the world again disappeared into the cloud.

Heavy rain fell through the night, and it was too warm and sloping at our marginal tent site for much comfort. We packed inside the tent then ventured out to plunge into the wet green forest for the steep 1,100-metre descent. The ferny forest floor hid numerous rotting logs, and we had many slips and falls. I simply broke a walking pole but Ian twisted his ankle badly, fortunately relatively close to the bottom. He hobbled out onto open flats beside the Pyke River where we set up the





Range, which reared suddenly and very steeply upwards; another 1,000-metre climb tomorrow.

More rain arrived overnight. The climb was very steep and slippery, ferns, moss and rotten logs proliferated, and it was surprisingly wet underfoot (given the gradient). It was also very beautiful, but the dripping forest rich in epiphytes could only be appreciated when we stopped for a breather. Wet through, our bodies were cooling rapidly on the exposed tops until we found a rare level spot in a small hollow. We threw the tent up and peeled off sodden clothes inside, hot soup aiding the warm-up. Ian's ankle had passed the test today.

Overnight rain turned to a freezing southerly and we awoke to a white veneer of snow-dusted tops and clear skies. The frozen tent slowed packing, but we then made rapid progress along the rolling 1,200-metre tops, with surf rolling into Big Bay directly below. Skippers Range stretched away southwards, with many peaks breaking the skyline, every one of them unnamed; we'd spend eight days up here and climb many of them. Cloud still enveloped the mass of the Darran Mountains beyond, but it seemed the southerly wasn't quite strong enough to push them to us, so we enjoyed cold and windy but clear walking all day.

The southeasterly gale continued next day, as did our clear conditions. We sidled steep tussock slopes and traversed rocky knolls, with spray blowing from a large lake in the valley below. The afternoon provided some particularly spectacular travel on a knife ridge followed by a steep scramble above a notch to outflank an impassable bluff. A tarn on a lee-side shelf caught our eye mid-afternoon and we descended to camp there. Even here there was the occasional gust, but it remained sunny.

We left early for a scramble up the steep rocky ridge towards a cluster of high summits. A delicate climb on loose rock led to one castle-like peak, and we then spent time exploring the rock basin below.

Glacier-smoothed hummocks of volcanic rock, with a wide variety of colours and textures, cradled many small tarns. Small masses of white and yellow Edelweiss flowers sprouted from fissures where soil had accumulated. After some fun slab climbing, we reached the highest (1,648 metres) summit for lunch, with views across a much of our route, past and yet to come, the distinctive Red Mountain now receding to the northeast.

Back at camp, we were tempted to stay but, in this country, if the weather stays

good one shouldn't waste it. We packed and crossed the arête above, before descending 600 metres over boulders and scrub to the low saddle between two sections of Skippers Range. An opening with tiered, vegetation-dammed tarns among tussock grass and shapely rock peaks above preceded a welcome campsite for tired bodies.

Deer trails and open leads led back up to an alpine tussock basin on the southern section of the range. The gleaming bulk of Mount Tutoko was now close, rearing beyond green forest and yellow tussock ridges. It was calm now but, fearing more high winds, we found a small hollow in which to pitch the tent after only a couple of hours walking, the surroundings a "garden" of prostrate shrubs and blue-green rocks dotted throughout the tussocks. After a satisfying afternoon scramble to a peak directly above camp, then dinner back at camp, we were treated to a spectacular sunset light show.

The clouds dissipated overnight and we made another short camp relocation, to a small tarn in a basin near the crest of range. It provided yet-another delightful setting; not just because of yet-more multi-coloured and textured rocks, clusters of green *Dracophyllum* heads, and the ubiquitous yellow-green snowgrass, but the grandstand views of rising valley cloud amongst the peaks. The cloud dropped again in the cool of evening to reveal brooding peaks in the blue light of a cloudy dusk.

Mist and light drizzle next morning reinforced our decision to stay put, our first rest after five consecutive full days on the go. After lunch, an increasing blueness in the grey mist preceded an atmospheric breakup. Anticipating a spectacular sunset, we climbed to a summit above camp and were not disappointed. Across the deep Hollyford valley rose the steep wall of the Darran Mountains, with a wave-like cloud mass breaking over an outlying ridge. The long and narrow Lake McKerrow lay 1,400 metres directly below, and in the lakeside forest down there was the Hollyford Track, the only formed track I'd walk in four weeks (and then for just a day). We stayed to see the post-sunset pastel shades light the sky and clouds, before scampering back to camp in the gathering dusk.

On another fine day, we crossed transverse schist ridges, another basin of small lakes, then undertook a steep side and climb to the range's final high peak, a 1,552-metre summit of shattered red and green volcanic rock. A steep descent led to

tent to rest, trying not to think of possible implications of the injury.

Rest was a relative term. We were back in sand fly country and, in the still and humid conditions, they were numerous and ferocious, so the options were either hide and sweat in the tent or sit outside in full body armour (including gloves and head nets).

There was time for a leisurely start next day for the flat plod down gravel and grass flats beside the Pyke River, a good introductory test for Ian's strapped ankle. Still backwater pools reflected the now-blue sky and surrounding ranges. There were several fords to waist deep before lunch, but minimal river flow here, then a final one before leaving the river and trying to maintain a consistent bearing through tangled swampy forest. We found a dry opening to camp amongst fallen trees and ferns right at the foot of Skippers





*A New Zealand Fur Seal pup peeps from beneath coastal boulders, Martins Bay*

another amazing lake and snowgrass basin, but there are few superlatives left now; turquoise lakes filled basins amongst red rock ice-scoured ridges, partly clothed in yellow tussock. The weather remained clear and still so we chose to camp in the most exposed spot imaginable for our final night on the range, with an incomparable view of Mount Tutoko rising 2,700 metres directly opposite.

Pink dawn light brushed the summit of Tutoko and its companion, Madeline, long before the other surrounding summits, and the Hollyford valley, was filled with cloud, mimicking the massive glacier that flowed here during the last ice age. After breakfast, we tore our eyes and camera lenses from the view to focus on the 1,300-metre final descent from Skippers Range direct to the Hollyford valley floor. The valley cloud slowly rose and we soon descended into it, the strident calls of a Kea farewelling us from the tops. Convex glaciated rock ribs fell away increasingly steeply below, and the mist-filtered views increased the level of intimidation. We stayed near the vegetation, and hence at least psychological handholds, as much as possible. The descent was continuously steep, the vegetation changing as altitude decreased. Lower down we were back in forest floored by ferns obscuring numerous trip hazards. We reached the Hollyford Track early in the afternoon and, after three weeks together, Ian and I bid farewell to each other; he had work to return to but I had another week to go.

Thanks to a now-light pack and the fitness that comes from weeks of walking, the ups and downs of the Demon Trail along Lake

McKerrow passed relatively easily, so I reached the coast at Martins Bay by the end of the next day. Since soon after we'd left, the tops the mountains had been immersed in clouds, and would remain so for several days yet – more great timing.

At Martins Bay I had a rest day, camping on the beach at the mouth of the Hollyford River to maximise sandfly-discouraging breezes and watching the antics of Fur Seal pups at nearby Long Point. The river mouth was a site with great geological variety in foreshore rocks and boulders, sourced from throughout the glaciated catchment, and I spent some time marvelling at the colours and textures of rock and lichen.

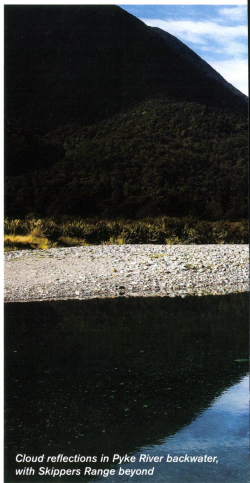
After a pre-arranged boat drop-off on the far side of the wide Hollyford River early next morning, I trudged south through the extensive Martins Bay dune field, amongst splashes of orange Pingao grass. The leaden sky above was soon again spitting rain. With my pack heavy once again, it was surprisingly tiring rock hopping and traversing soft gravel beaches around the coast, so I was easily distracted by patterns in the sand-polished outcrops of pearly-white limestone.

Rain was falling heavily by the time I reached the mouth of the Kaiporo River, with even the low coastal hills now in cloud. In these bleak conditions, I headed inland up the Kaiporo valley, fording the rising river multiple times and climbing over forested ridges when river flats and terraces were unavailable, barely stopping in order to maximise progress before being trapped by flooded streams. Late in the afternoon I approached a rustic hut at the edge of the final flat. Unexpectedly for both of us, a

deer hunter by the name of Bill (he had the spoils of his efforts spread around the hut drying) was already occupying it. It was interesting talking into the evening from the perspectives of two very different lives.

Continuing overnight rain ensured the bush remained saturated but there were blue patches in the sky by dawn, perfect timing for another high crossing. I had a challenging day navigating a confusing array of streams, ridges, bluffs and scrub, eventually climbing almost 1,200 metres to the crest of a narrow snowgrass-clad ridge. I found a small flat to pitch my tent near the only tarn, and spent the final hours of the day taking in the magnificent view, enhanced by a full moon rising at sunset. My spur was an outlier of the Pembroke range, the westernmost bastion of the Darran Mountains, and I had a clear and close view of its western face; a sweep from grey bluffs and yellow tussock gullies below its craggy 2,000-metre crest through dense green forest canopy to blue sea. The rock tower of Mount Grave protruded beyond the range, beckoning. The scale of the landscape I was traversing had just gone up a notch.

The slow build-up of threatening cloud during the next day discouraged much



*Cloud reflections in Pyke River backwater, with Skippers Range beyond*

lingering as I was keen to cross to the relative shelter of the Harrison valley. This involved a precipitous plunge into a small hanging basin, a steep side below bluffs, and then a long climb back up a large boulder gully. The dramatic Harrison valley was hidden until the final crest. This once-heavily glaciated valley is carved in crystalline gneiss and granite rock and so has a classic U-shaped form, with cut-off convex spurs; spectacular, but potentially challenging to traverse.

I spent a day around the head of the Harrison valley, climbing the rock spire of Ongaruanupu and broad dome of Te Hau, and again fascinated by patterns in the banded gneiss bedrock, with shades of grey sometimes dotted with red garnet crystals or cut with white quartz veins, the greens and yellows of lush vegetation rimming small tarns, or reflections in blue Lake Pukatahi. The dark tower of Mount Grave brooded across the valley and later became the focus for building hogback cloud formations. My weather window was ending again.

The rain became heavy just after an early pack up next morning. I followed an initially-improbable route down a steep system of vegetated gullies, down-climbing

in trees at times, then outflanked a series of bluffs hidden in forest to reach the Harrison River. In good weather rock hopping provides relatively rapid travel here but the river was rising fast and, where exposed, the boulders were wet. As a slip on my own here would not be healthy, I mostly stayed in the forest. It was rough going, with many small hummocks and swamps, and deep moss often hid holes and fallen logs.

When I reached the spate of Pembroke Creek, I knew a dry shelter was not far away. I was tired, but soaked now anyway, so I threw myself from a midstream boulder towards the far bank. This was perhaps a questionable action given the proximity of the now-flooded Harrison River, but 20 minutes later I had the stove going and was peeling off wet clothes in the shelter of the Grave bivi rock. I pitched my tent beneath the massive shelter (to protect against drips) and warmed and dozed in my sleeping bag to the roar of the nearby river, acoustically amplified by the overhanging rock.

The river rose another metre before dark. I tried to sleep, nervous about the prospect of being flooded out, but the flood roar decreased during the post-midnight hours

and by dawn the river had fallen substantially. It only took a couple of hours of slippery cobbles and riverside forest to reach Harrison Cove, an isolated inlet and one of the few flat areas around Milford Sound. Clearing cloud hung about Milford's signature Mitre Peak and a procession of tourist cruise boats motored by well offshore, oblivious to my presence. The Milford Sound underwater observatory was within hailing distance so I gave it a go, despite seeing no movement there, and someone soon responded. I asked them to contact a kayak tour company that I knew had a small boat tender and, within 30 minutes, it appeared around the point (having been on a tour at the time). I waded out to meet it and was suddenly returning to a different world, after four weeks where the only concerns were route finding and staying alive. [W](http://www.grantdixonphotography.com.au)

A practiced bushwalker, photographer and trained geologist, Tasmanian Grant Dixon is also a longtime contributor to *Wild* having made regular submissions since the early '90s. See his website for more examples of his work and stay tuned for future articles.



[www.grantdixonphotography.com.au](http://www.grantdixonphotography.com.au)



# A very SCENIC suffering

Many visit southeast Queensland's Scenic Rim for short walks every year, but *Ryan Siacci* sought to take on a more formidable 180-kilometre traverse

Much like disco, bell-bottoms and pet rocks, the Scenic Rim Traverse is a trend that faded during the seventies and never truly returned to vogue. There are several adequate, perhaps even prudent and sane reasons for this.

Residents of South East Queensland, particularly folk of an outdoorsy persuasion, will be intimately acquainted with the concept of the Scenic Rim. Wedged between vast tracts of agricultural land and the inexorable urban sprawl of one of Australia's fastest growing population centres, the Scenic Rim remains as the last bastion of remote wilderness in the region.

Volcanic in origin, the various mountain ranges of the rim describe a huge quarter circle spanning some 200 kilometres from Laidley to the Gold Coast. In a region known for its beautiful and diverse landscapes, the Scenic Rim is truly the jewel in its crown.

With rugged peaks, sublime panoramas, pristine rainforests and hidden waterfalls, it is no wonder the region attracts hundreds of adventurers every week.

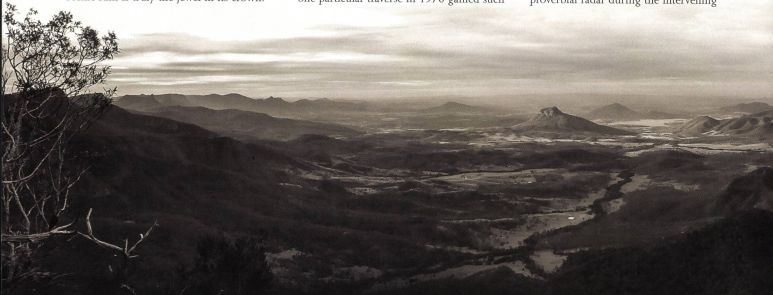
But it wasn't always so, and it took the vision of several giants of local history to secure the Rim's protected status. The term itself was coined by Arthur Groom (co-founder of Binna Burra Lodge) in 1941. Concerned with the detrimental effects of wilderness fragmentation caused by logging and other industry, he proposed that this grand chain of mountains be gazetted as a National Park.

Once conceptualised, the Scenic Rim offered the savvy outdoorsman a challenge without equal in the region – a complete, overland traverse. Early forays laid the exploratory groundwork, but matters truly began to heat up in the Seventies. Indeed, one particular traverse in 1976 gained such

recognition as to provide a catalyst for the formation of the Scenic Rim Association, thus proving instrumental in protecting the region.

The stakes were continually raised, culminating with Bruce Stoff's landmark traverse in 1978. Conducted largely solo, Stoff completed an unsupported walk from Mount Beau Brummel (just south of the township of Laidley) to Point Danger on the Pacific Ocean in under 10 days. Although others would later complete the trip faster, none would do so without caches and modest support crews.

The benchmark had been set, though no sooner than it had, the concept fell into rapid and almost total obscurity. While there have been a handful of undocumented trips, the Scenic Rim Traverse seems to have unceremoniously disappeared from the proverbial radar during the intervening



SE Queensland's Scenic Rim  
Photos: Ryan Siacci



decades. During this time, the landscape has been irrevocably altered. Erstwhile trails have returned to anarchy, while land management and ownership in other areas has changed significantly. It's a very different Rim to the one experienced by Groom and Stoff.

## JOURNEY TO THE RIM

I first came into contact with the idea during my sporadic peak-bagging episodes along the Rim in the previous decade. The idea had always seemed captivating, but entirely elusive. Information was scant – digital or otherwise. My various half-hearted diggings unearthed little more than a collection of photos from a 2008 expedition, and the fact that most of the key literature was out of print and gathering mildew in clandestine archives.

Over the course of the following decade, I would occasionally revisit the idea only to encounter those very same roadblocks. Despite this, the idea remained firmly entrenched in some hidden cave of desire in the dark recesses of my brain. More than any other place on Earth, the Scenic Rim helped shape me as an outdoorsman. It was there, in the primordial gullies of Lamington and on the craggy flanks of Mount Barney, that my passion for the hills took root and blossomed. To link the entire region in one expedition, I reasoned, would be the ultimate realisation of that passion.

The true impetus for my 2016 trip came with the re-print of Robert Rankin's near-biblical tome *Secrets of the Scenic Rim*. Following its return to the shelves, Secrets regained the mantle as one of most authoritative guides to the region. That said, the book's exposition of the traverse is brief, almost to the point of dismissive, with the author claiming that he sees "no great

attraction in stringing together a number of wild regions separated by roads and development for the sake of creating a very long walk."

Even so, the nuggets of information provided in the guide, as well as the excellent historical recounts of expeditions of yore, spurred me to continue my research. I eventually pieced together a decent understanding of the necessary details, collected from various sources with various degrees of relevance.

For the most current information, I contacted my colleague Andrew Stephan, who I eventually managed to recruit as my partner for the walk. An outstanding bushman, Andrew owes his incredible knowledge of the Scenic Rim both to his employment as an outdoor educator, and to his insatiable passion for exploration. A handy friend to have.

Owing to the terrain differences that would be experienced during our "modern" traverse, I had no intention of following an exact template as dictated by the classic expeditions of the previous century. Some purists would have you begin and end at fixed locations, although these vary widely depending on whom you ask. Others maintain that each major peak must be climbed along the way, a list of which also escapes definitive terms. At the end of the day, each party must subscribe to their own philosophy toward adventure.

For me, the 'purity' of our expedition hinged upon two main parameters. First, that we would carry the entirety of our food and equipment without the use of caches. Second, that we would conduct the expedition as much as possible within National Parks and wilderness areas, eschewing the need to negotiate with several

individual private landowners.

With this in mind, dawn of the 25th of June found us in Goomburra Section of the Main Range, shouldering our modest 15-kilogram packs before hiking south along the range. 180 kilometres separated us from our goal of reaching Lamington, seven days of hard yakka. Those kilometres would not come easily, but therein lay the attraction.

## RIDING THE ROLLERCOASTER

We had embarked on the sternest challenge the Scenic Rim had to offer, a true test for the Australian outdoorsperson, which sounds great in theory, but such expansive distances and the effort they imply are strictly academic until you experience them. We were in for tough times indeed.

The first day found us heading south through Main Range, one of the most frequented and well-developed sections of the traverse. After a sobering glimpse toward the horizon from Sylvester's Lookout, we ambled along the civilised trails that cross Mount Cordeaux and Mount Mitchell, the twin guardians of Cunningham's Gap. After a dicey descent from the razorback on Mitchell's south face, it was time for a quick assault on Spicer's Peak in the feeble rays of the setting sun.

A magnificent sunrise over the Moogerah Peaks heralded our second day, during which we'd tackle the Spicer's to Teviot section. Regularly lauded as the premier bushwalk of SEQ, this majestic chain of peaks is usually undertaken as a three-day jaunt. We would dispatch it in a single day of steep gradients, treacherous cliff breaks and heartbreaking descents. The rough trail was littered with the detritus of a recent storm, ensuring difficult conditions underfoot and regular detours. It was our first test, but it would not be our last.





*Andrew stands watch beside a prominent border marker*

Day Three saw a dawn raid on Wilson's Peak, followed by a lazy stroll along the border fence. With the Main Range behind us, we had now entered the McPherson Range. Mount Clunie was the first obstacle, a steep and vicious knoll clad in thick vegetation that would prove a harbinger of the horrors to come. Open scrub and grassy meadows were soon to be replaced with oppressive, tangled rainforests. However, the remainder of the day provided easy mileage with the rabbit fence for guidance.

The fourth day was where our troubles truly began. The terrain around the Mount Ballow massif and continuing east was a chaotic mess of vines, thorns, loose rocks,

muddy slopes, logging regrowth, and everything else that is hateful to human sensibilities. Our progress slowed considerably, which did little for our mental health. There was a sense of desperation here, a sense that you might never escape. These thoughts, of course, were entirely irrational. But that didn't stop them from existing.

It probably sounds like a cliché, but it was a true rollercoaster of emotions. When I stumbled across the rabbit fence near Mount Lindsey at Collin's Gap, I was delirious with joy. By contrast, I had been in the pits of despair some three hours previously. Even now, it's hard to imagine having experienced these extreme swings of emotion and even harder to explain them. I must admit that I entertained a secret desire to quit following days such as these.

Thankfully, the following day was a welcome change. Some fast-paced hoofing along the border fence from Mount Lindsey to Mount Gipps near the Lion's Road provided succour for frayed nerves. What's more, there were fantastic views for the first time in over two days. Our spirits soared while viewing the expansive mountain vistas – a well-deserved reward after the previous days of toil and dread.

The last two days are a savage blur. The near-impenetrable rainforest of South Lamington is a hellish place with little to nothing that can be said for its redemption. We battled for each and every kilometre, fighting veritable walls of ferns, vines and wait-a-while (also known as lawyer vine, also known as irrefutable proof against the existence of a benevolent deity).

For some time, we were able to follow the border fence, which the malevolent rainforest was in the process of subjugating. That fence, for some time, represents a

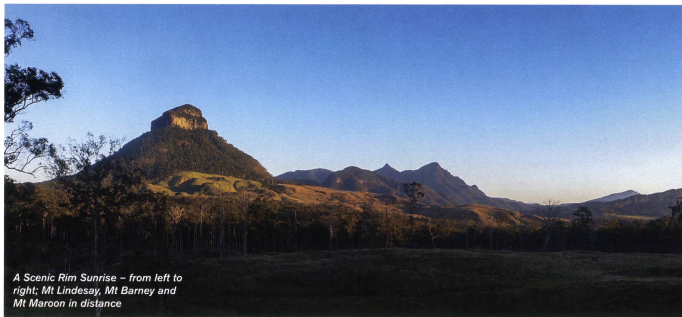
spiritual tether to the world you come from, the one in which you belong. In its absence, you begin to feel rather isolated and vulnerable. Without pause, we stumbled on for hours on end to escape the wretched forest, finally discovering salvation on the graded tracks near Green Mountains.

A final trot toward the finish line brought my journey to an end. I hadn't a single gram of food to spare. Andrew, on the other hand, decided on a mad dash to the coast, stopping in Springbrook for a quick refuel. He's a bit of a legend and I take my hat off to him.

As for myself, I'm proud of my accomplishment and consider it a highly successful adventure undertaken on my own terms. Although we had vague ambitions of perhaps bettering the unsupported record, our ability to simply go the distance and bring the Scenic Rim Traverse to a conclusion feels like an incredible achievement.

Given the deterioration of trails in certain segments, I feel as though that record may stand for some time, perhaps indefinitely. Bruce Stoff's gauntlet remains for those who would pick it up, but a word for the wise – this trip is not for the faint of heart. In order to best Stoffey, you'll need to be an experienced bushwalker and an expert navigator, as well as possess a large machete and a level of fitness that can likely only be gained through some misguided deal with Satan.

In completing the Scenic Rim Traverse, I hope that we've lit the torch again for this grande olde adventure. I'd love to see more people taking the challenge and pitting themselves against the Rim. It would be shame to allow this home-grown test of grit and gumption to become nothing more than a distant memory. Get stuck in, and keep me posted! W



*A Scenic Rim Sunrise – from left to right; Mt Lindsey, Mt Barney and Mt Maroon in distance*

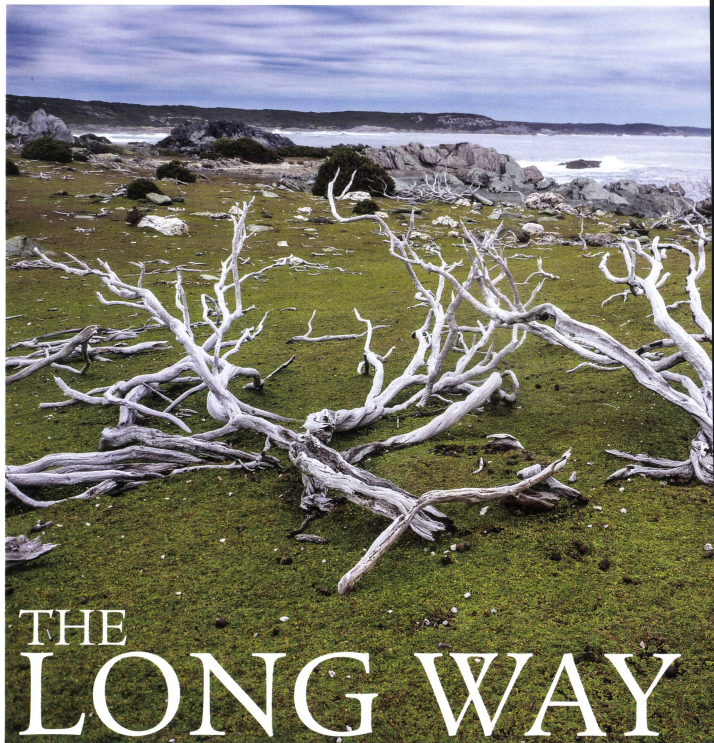


Ryan Siacci served in the Australian Army for seven years before leaving to pursue his dream of becoming a mountain guide. He has since travelled the world in a bid to further his alpine skills, visiting areas including Patagonia, Alaska and New Zealand along the way.



ryansiacci.wordpress.com





# THE LONG WAY AROUND

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A dream inspired by and born on a jagged peak led *Alexander Robey* to spend 200 days over 22 expeditions circumnavigating Tasmania

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"Seen any OBPs?" I inquired of Bob Brown as I grabbed my pack off the white pebbly airstrip at Melaleuca. I ducked under the wing of the small airplane that dropped me in the heart of Tasmania's Southwest National Park. It was a much more inspiring place to meet with the former Greens leader than in the 'bustle' of Hobart. Bob stood tall in gumboots, ready for a session monitoring the rare and endangered orange-bellied parrots (OBPs).

"I have seen a few, but heard many more!" he replied. My confused and perplexed facial expression invited clarification. "OBPs; Oh Bob Please!" He smiled. "Those bird boxes in the trees still providing room service meals for the ingenious tiger snakes?" I asked as we walked towards the bird observatory. How symbolic to stand in that place with the man so instrumental to Tasmanian wilderness environmental protection. "How many times you been here to





*The rugged west coast.*  
Photos: Alexander Robey



*A circle for displaced buoys*

to remain fit and healthy for which I plan to hike the Arthurs Range every 10 years for 50 years.

It wasn't the first time, but I reiterated my gratefulness to Bob, not only for the work he had done for the environment, but to also enable adventures like those I enjoy.

"Come over for a meal at sunset and tell me more about this 20 year journey," Bob invited.

In between bird watching, sips of tea and a quick dash to photograph the sunset reflected in one of the brackish ponds, the conversation flowed as we both shared a lifetime of endeavours, concern for the environment and our love for the outdoors.

## THE JOURNEY BEGINS

I fell in love with the Tasmanian wilderness via the photography of Rob Rankin, Peter Dombrovskis, as well as Bob's environmental activism. From there, a 15-day traverse of the Arthur Range with my older brother Peter saw me standing on top of the Federation Peak in my early twenties. The wind toyed with my drenched hair as I strained to view Prior Beach on the south coast and Bathurst Harbour on the west coast. The dream to experience the coastline was born on that shark tooth-shaped peak, consolidated a week later on a hike out to Cape Pillar on the Tasman Peninsula and then climbing the sea cliffs of Freycinet National Park. Beach combing, boyhood fiction novels

and the historical records of shipwrecked sailors further captured my imagination. In 1855, five shipwrecked sailors from the *Spy* hiked for 17 days down the west coast from the Pieman River to Port Davey. They survived on not much more than a bag of potatoes, shellfish off the rocks and a few salvaged items. A journey that would test even the strongest and best provisioned of modern day hikers. Another shipwrecked sailor of that era wandered lost for three months near isolated Port Davey on the south west coast. I naturally wondered if I was capable of such a journey with modern gear and provisions.

My first solo hike of 16 days saw me struggle under the weight of a heavy pack from Melaleuca out to the South West Cape before backtracking to pick up a food dump hanging in a tree at New Harbour. I wanted an uninterrupted hike along the entire southern coastline. Experience would dictate a different approach now. The wild and remote west coast, massive rolling swells careering into the fluted dolerite cliffs further encouraged my fascination. My gear had been heavy, with a 3.5-kilo, two-person tent. It was what I had; funds were tight as a young man. I saw not a soul for 11 days. By the end of the hike, my heavily rationed food was gone, as well as my urgency to see people. That surprised me as I have a naturally social temperament.

With several other hikes under my belt in

Melaleuca?" Bob asked. Definitely two hands to count, jumped to my mind as I totted up the trips in my head. "It all started up there 20 years ago," I pointed north to the silhouette of the Western Arthurs and Federation Peak. "What started?" Bob asked. It had been a 20-year journey that hatched in 1997. I had no idea when I started out what would transpire, or even how much time and money I would invest in the project. It was more important for me to be with the coastline than 'do' the coastline, thereby avoiding a box-ticking exercise. It's also part of a 50-year life goal

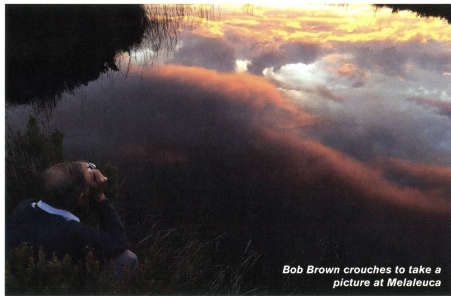
the Central Plateau region, my first big stint in Tassie ended after a winter trip along the Overland Track. I returned home to sunny Brisbane with images of towering cliffs, sweeping beaches and 100 kilometres of the 1,500-kilometre coastline that had borne my footprints. How to execute a full trip around weighed on my mind.

## A GLIMPSE OF THE WEST

In between summer climbing trips to the Southern Alps in New Zealand, 3 years later the south west lured me back with an 18-day hike from Scott's Peak Dam, with a quick dash to Lake Oberon on the Western Arthurs, before the muddy Port Davey Track and then the South Coast Track. The west coast glimpses fuelled my enthusiasm, yet its reputation for only 'hard core hikers adept with deprivation' made it disappear quickly, just like the rolling storm front that blanketed the coast in dark gloominess.



*The photo that started it all.  
Western Arthurs*



*Bob Brown crouches to take a picture at Melaleuca*

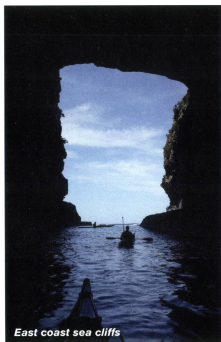
Perched on a snow-covered rocky outcrop on the North Col of Mount Everest in Tibet, taking the role of cameraman on an expedition and wrapped in as much down clothing as possible, the romanticism of my Tassie island dream reared its head once more. I carried an ammonite shell fossil in my pocket that I'd picked up on the Tibetan Plateau, reminding me of my yearning for wild coastlines. Warm, sunlit beaches with screeching cormorants and squabbling gulls echoed through my head. The boyhood fantasy of finding a precious shell, a piece of a shipwreck and whalebone whisked me away from the desolate mountainous landscape. My younger brother Charles joined me on two summer alpine trips to New Zealand. He is as strong as an ox, having rowed for Australia, and loves the ocean. As much as we loved the mountain trips together, the ocean called us. The islands of Bass Strait fascinated me and instead of a flight to

Flinders Island and a hike on the peaks of Strzelecki National Park, I convinced Charles that a sea kayak trip across would provide us the experience of a lifetime. Fresh caught fish, pristine beaches on remote islands, seals barking on rocks to cheer us on and the lure of adventure motivated the long hours of training and preparation.

.....  
A storm battered the yachts moored at our departure point, while ghost-like figures fixed rigging. They saw our concerned expressions in reply to their question, "Where are we headed?"

The ranger had to share his shark photos with us, and after an unnerving two-day wait for the weather window to open, we set off for Hogan Island – the first island 50 kilometres distant. We launched deck-mounted sails to harness the wind, darted between and along massive swells. The long paddling stretches between islands formed the bulk of our dot-to-dot 11-day, 350-kilometre journey from Port Welshpool north of Wilson's Promontory across Bass Strait. We arrived at Little Musselroe Bay on the north east tip not a moment too soon as a storm whipped five-metre, stand-up waves. Dad met us at the end, only to wave goodbye once more as we paddled south to take in the picturesque east coast scenery.

.....  
After several years of working hard and expeditions around the world, including guiding a team up Denali in Alaska, climbing and hiking trips to NZ and the European Alps, my brief trips back to Tasmania engendered an uncomfortable realisation. What about the dream to journey all the way round? I had been in no hurry, yet at that pace, a lifetime would not be enough. Charles and I set off from Kettering south of Hobart to circumnavigate Tasmania by sea kayak and my friend Nigel joined us for the first spectacular week up the east coast. The paddle across Storm Bay brought unusually calm conditions. Realising my dream of peering from sea level up at the fluted cliffs of Cape Pillar and Tasman Island, born over a decade before, brought a sense of awe and insignificance. The journey proved just as thrilling to the north as we darted in and out of sea caves, waved on by bull kelp exposed by the swell along the ochre-coloured granite rock formations. Charles and I camped at the exact spot after our Bass Strait crossing on the north end, before battling the northwesterly winds as we pushed west along the northern coast. The coastal communities with all their character



East coast sea cliffs

brought just as much fascination as the wild coast in between.

Woolnorth on the northwest corner confirmed a journey well down, yet the intimidating west coast fumed in stormy horror. The paddle around Cape Grim could not have been grimmer as monster waves battered the rocky coastline and reverberated waves several metres high back at us. The swell collisions threw our kayaks unnervingly skywards. The silent whispers and invisible footprints of the Tarkiner Indigenous peoples had called me to explore that region of the coastline. After 23 days, a storm ended our circumnavigation at Strahan. The west coast threw all its might at us. Within a week's paddle, I would have linked the entire coast together, a few days more to finish at Kettering. It wasn't to be. My kayak damaged and my body exhausted, I wondered how it would be possible to complete the last and most challenging section of the coast.

#### THE FINAL LEG

The mountains fuelled my coastal passion in a symbiotic relationship. Standing on the summit of the Matterhorn in Italy, a five-year project complete after return visits, the swirling cloud reminded me of my first summit of Federation Peak. I just had to finish the 'trip around' somehow. The goal inched closer after an inspiring hike of the magnificent South West Cape Circuit that scoots the southern coastline, up the west coast to Port Davey and completes the round trip at Delaveuca. I returned two years later to Tasmania with my kayak to enjoy some of my favourite places along the north coast fleetingly visited on my

circumnavigation and ready to paddle the west coast from Strahan to finish the loop. 10-metre waves and nervous apprehension brought that idea to a halt. I retreated to the east coast to kayak the eastern flank of Bruny Island before jumping on the brigantine Windeward Bound to sail the southern coastline, explore Port Davey and paddle my kayak in the sublime calm waters of Bathurst Harbour. It was eight days to enjoy the ocean vantage of the dramatic coastline I had previously hiked, and some kilometres closer to joining the dots of my overall goal.

Determined to finish the loop, I then found myself at the southeast corner at Cockle Creek, paddling day trips waiting for the weather to open to paddle clockwise around to Strahan. My month-long holiday was complete but the bad weather wasn't.

Determined to finish the trip after rescheduling my home life, I took off back to the west coast to embark on a three-week 450-kilometre kayak and hike of the mid-west coast. I kayaked south down Macquarie Harbour, ditched my kayak and hiked rough tracks to the west coast, hiking south, before returning to retrieve my stashed kayak and continue south. An accidental trip became one of my all-time favourites. The Low Rocky Point Track had not been hiked in three years. I felt like an apocalypse survivor as I hiked the remote, 70-kilometre track from Birchs Inlet at Macquarie Harbour to the west coast. The two weeks I spent down there was the most isolated in all my years of exploring Tassie. 20 years had now passed with over 200 days spent in the Tasmanian wilderness and finally I felt like I'd achieved my ambition.

Now it's time to begin again. [W](#)

To read more about Alexander's "A Trip Around" Tasmania, see past *Wild* issues:

- 144 The Islands Issue, "How the West Was Won"
- 151 The Echo of Sacred Songs, "Invisible Footprints, Silent Whispers"
- 152 Retracing Lost Paths, "An Exploration Into the Heart"

Queenslander, Alexander Robey navigates his inner landscape inspired and energised by nature. He has hiked, climbed, paddled and filmed in wilderness areas around the world. Alexander is a registered clinical hypnotherapist, psychotherapist and also runs wellness programs.



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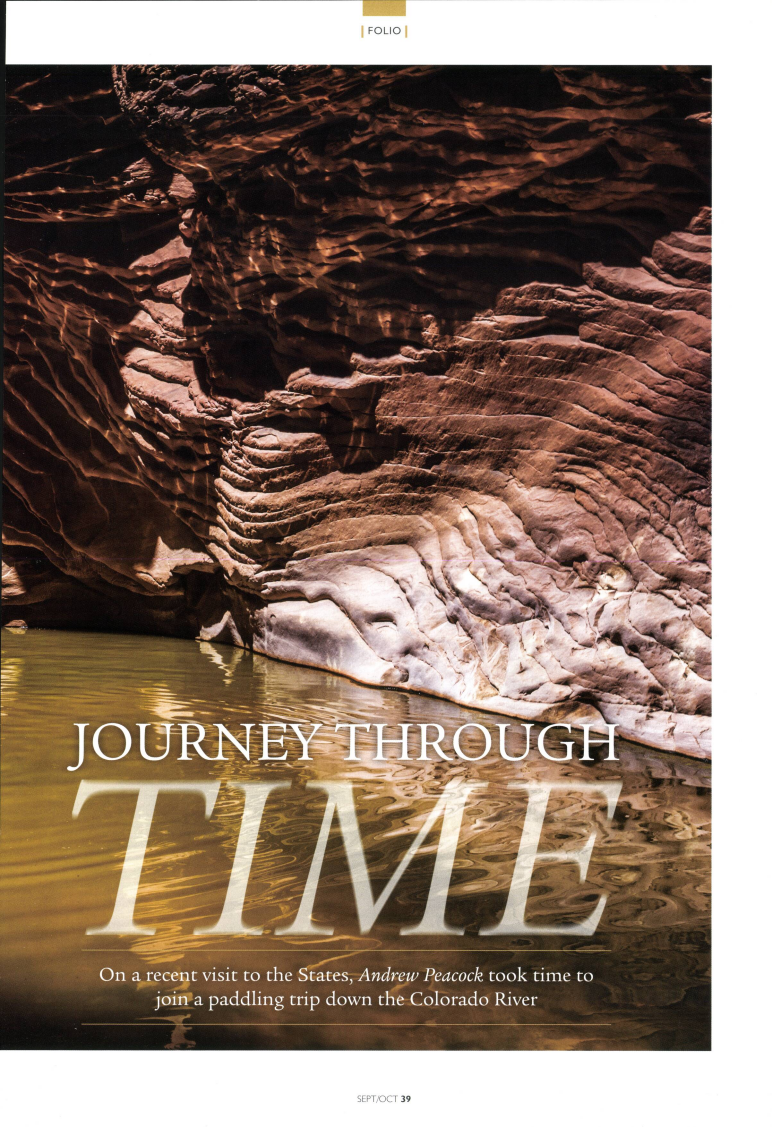
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A photograph of a river flowing through a canyon. The rock walls are layered and textured, with warm, golden-brown tones. The water is calm, reflecting the light. The title "JOURNEY THROUGH TIME" is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

# JOURNEY THROUGH *TIME*

On a recent visit to the States, *Andrew Peacock* took time to  
join a paddling trip down the Colorado River







Previous page: Sabina Alleman cools off in North Canyon, Grand Canyon NP, Arizona, USA.

Clockwise from left:  
Jon Imhoof and Sabina paddle stand up  
paddleboards on Havasu Creek near its  
junction with the Colorado River; Drew  
Norton and Allison Imhoof on a raft in  
Specter Rapid; Tony Buchanan at Travertine  
Canyon beside the Colorado River,  
Hualapai Reservation.

Andrew is an Australian expedition doctor and adventure travel photographer producing breathtaking imagery telling stories of the places he's explored. His journeys are infused with a desire to return home with bold and creative images. Adventurous people enjoying life in a dramatic landscape really captures his attention as reflected in this series of images from a rafting trip down the Colorado River.



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# *In the* **BLOOD**

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From his earliest experiences of kayaking to running his own Tasmanian-based tour company, *Reg Grundy* talks to *Wild* about his passion for paddling

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*Reg Grundy, owner and guide  
for Roaring 40s Kayaking.  
Photos: Supplied*

I sometimes wonder if the ocean is in my blood. For generations my family has worked with the sea – as fishermen, marine surveyors, ferry operators, lighthouse keepers and now, of course, a kayak tour operator. A life on the ocean was probably more of a destiny than I realised.”

– Reg Grundy

From his earliest days, Reg Grundy formed a deep bond with Tasmania’s dramatic coastlines and the volatile, all-encompassing sea. This bond has allowed him to pursue a career doing what he loves, while also giving back to the environment that supports it.

Now as the owner, operator and chief guide at Roaring 40s Kayaking, Reg recalls his first taste of paddling while at school.

“I discovered kayaking at my riverfront high school in Hobart, back in the good old days when kayaking was part of the school curriculum,” he says. “Immediately, sitting in a classroom looking out at the water didn’t seem anywhere near as good as actually being on the water.”

Yet the stirrings of a lifelong passion for sea kayaking was yet to fully take hold as the young Tasmanian set his sights on the horizon after completing his education. Reg says that during this time he started down the path of “what some people would call a ‘real career’ overseas,” while also taking time to travel, hike and cycle. “Somehow the kayaking always called to me,” he says.

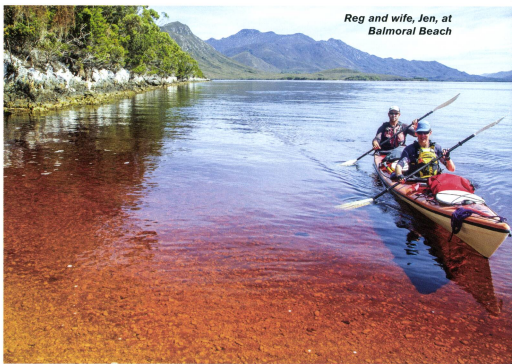
“When I returned home to Australia I was keen to get back into kayaking, but my wife (who by that time was also my business partner), Jen, had never been in a kayak.

“After a day trip out of Noosa, and although Jen was as sick as a dog for most of the time, we were both totally hooked. I just had to get my own kayaks again after that.”

Reg set about gaining qualifications as an instructor and was soon leading tours. A short time after, in 2013, the pair moved back to Tasmania from where they had lived in Queensland and summarily purchased Roaring 40s Kayaking – a well-established kayak tourism business focused on offering three and seven-day journeys in the southwest of the state.

“I had done some guiding for Roaring 40s prior to purchasing it and had fallen in love with the remote wilderness of the southwest. This place feels like the edge of the world: harsh, brutal and beautiful all in one.

“I’ve paddled in numerous places around the world and never seen or experienced any other life it. On a map it appears near to Hobart, but in reality it’s up there as one of the most remote places in Australia.”



Reg and wife, Jen, at Balmoral Beach

Reg’s tours offer visitors a chance to immerse themselves in this remoteness and to see a wilderness that would appear very similar to the way it did to the first Europeans to visit the region. The impact it has on his clients is almost as rewarding as getting to visit the place on a regular basis, Reg says.

“Taking a group out into the open sea as we nose out from behind the Breaksea Islands, seeing them each experience the raw power of the Southern Ocean for the first time – I can almost feel the ocean empowering them.”

According to Reg, kayaking is very much like bushwalking, but with “good food and no sore knees”. The tour operator says the kayaks offers a way to see wilderness places from a different perspective, as the kayak can get to places other vessels would not, moving at a pace that’s a little closer to walking speed.

“Seals come and seek us out when we paddle on the Tasman Peninsula, and we’ll often float beneath sea eagles with our paddles out of the water, just absorbing the breathtaking sight.

“Another great thing about kayaking here is the ability to pull ashore and walk to places that few other people ever visit. When you climb to the top of a peak like Mount Stokes it’s literally like standing on a map. You can see pretty much everywhere we’ve paddled and vast stretches of wilderness.”

Importantly, Reg has long recognised the beauty of the world’s coasts as something worth working to preserve in any way possible. As such, Roaring 40s is dedicated

to working with Tasmania’s Parks and Wildlife Service as part of its Green Guardians program. As a result, Reg and his team regularly partake in shorebird surveys, rubbish surveys and rubbish collection.

“Given the remoteness of the location, we’re usually the only resource available to undertake such work.”

For the opportunity that sea kayaking has given him, Reg is more than happy to go the extra distance to protect it.

“Kayaking has really enriched my life,” he says. “Without it I could still be sitting in an office looking out at the water rather than being out on it – much like I was at school those many years ago.” [www.roaring40skayaking.com.au](http://www.roaring40skayaking.com.au)



[www.roaring40skayaking.com.au](http://www.roaring40skayaking.com.au)

#### Right at home





# The Day We Climbed MOUNT PROTEUS

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*Louise Fairfax* recounts her mission to summit a chilly Mount Proteus in one day

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Of course we wanted to reach the summit of Mount Proteus, a peak hiding shyly behind (and to the west of) the bigger and more imposing elephant of a hulk, Mount Pelion West, which dominates the scenery along the Overland Track for many kilometres. However, reaching this summit was not the major thought that wrested my attention when I awoke on the day we intended to climb.

After a good-sized walk to get to base camp the previous day, we had retired to our tents early due to the drizzling rain that made socialising impossible. I had been very cold during the night, and so was chastising myself for being a wuss as I reluctantly entered the world outside the tent to give a nod of recognition to the new day, girding myself for a lengthy plod in murky mist on a compass bearing to reach our summit. But what was this? I squealed in delight and surprise; what greeted me as I took my first steps was a

frozen white landscape, with each scoparia leaf a miniature, bejewelled dagger of glittering ice crystals. Pelion West towered regally above this glistening white sea, glowing red in the rising sun under a clear, cerulean sky. My spirits soared. What a perfect day to add another Tasmanian peak to our collection.

My two companions for this trip – Angela and Maureen – are more fond of sleep than I, but had reluctantly agreed to an early start in case it was a worst-case-scenario, epic-length day, in which case we'd be finishing in the dark. With the light still golden and movement punctuated with the compulsive clicking of cameras, we set off, my compass on a bearing just to get our direction established before we let the terrain dictate matters a little more.

When the landscape looks as if the White Witch from Narnia has paid a visit overnight, you can expect it to be cold, so we were appropriately rugged up for the

journey, each contemplating the fact that we were probably injuring yet another pair of overtrousers in the spear thickets of scoparia through which we moved.

The going was tough, as each step involved lifting our feet and knees very high in order to clear either buttongrass or scoparia. We noticed we were tired, but none of us is the type to allow personal fatigue to have any great influence on our progress. On we pressed. As we climbed higher, we had to force our way through some resisting thick patches of bush that left whoever was in the lead feeling rather drained. This same scrub had indirectly been Maureen's undoing on her first attempt, on a 36-degree day that offered no water anywhere on the journey. With less than a kilometre to go, she had been forced to abandon her quest, dizzy and ill from thirst and heat exhaustion. These were far from problematic today. We only had to deal with the scarcity of daylight hours



Snack time on the Arm River Track  
Photos: Louise Fairfax

and leg fatigue from all the 40-centimetre-high leg lifts for a couple of hours' continuous thrust in each direction.

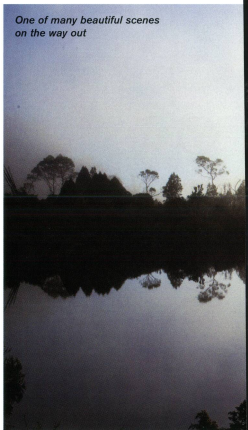
Going the distance was, for us on this day, a lot more than just reaching the summit that was now becoming clearer with each step. For Maureen, summitting meant she would now only have 10 Abels (Tasmania's equivalents of Scottish Munros or English Wainwrights for peak baggers) left until she had climbed every one. For me, it meant just 23 to go. Angela doesn't want to play the counting game, but I promise you, having climbed a large number of my peaks with her, if she did count, she'd find herself among Tasmania's leading bushwomen.

We held hands as we accidentally lurched forward onto the summit cairn together, laughing at the near topple. We had taken two and a half hours of unabated frog-marching and climbing to get here from our base camp. It wasn't yet near lunch time by any clocks, but for girls on a mountain, summit time is lunch time, whatever the clock says. We opened our little packages, crouched

rather than sat (too much ice still for that) and soaked in the beauty, playing the usual game of naming the surrounding mountains, remembering happy or funny times on some, or sharing tales of near disaster or mishaps on others. Most mountains have a story, and we have now climbed most mountains. It was too cold to take off our gloves, so we were rather clumsy eaters, but no one is there in the wilderness to censure lack of table manners. We were, all three, elated about having another summit under our belts. It was fun to have an all-female expedition to a new summit.

We had a different tactic on the rebound, having noticed that, against our suppositions, the marshy ground nearer the creek, with coral grass, was faster than the drier ground higher up, so progress was easier, although a little more circuitous. The splits were thus a little faster on the rebound back to the tents where we had lunch number two and a tiny bit of a breather before packing up. We all needed a good hour to eat, rest and break camp before setting out again

*One of many beautiful scenes on the way out*







on a journey that would last three hours including stops.

Angela had predicted that we'd need head torches at about 5.45. At exactly that time, we happened to agree that it was dangerous to try to negotiate the dark forest without light. I was getting worried that I'd fall down one of the steps on the track that I couldn't see. The final 20 minutes were thus done so that anyone watching from a distance would see three little circles of light, one behind the other, weaving their way over tree roots and creeks to reach New Pelion Hut.

There, we found a jolly group of capable schoolgirls from Hobart, learning to tough it in the Tassie winter. They didn't speak about the cold or the trials of the track, however; all they could talk about was the fabulous winter fairyland they'd enjoyed that day. W

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A former academic and Australian representative at athletics, orienteering and triathlon, Louise now cares for her ill husband, combining that role with freelance writing and photography. Wild places are important to her for physical and spiritual reasons. She loves the act of gaining height, as well as sleeping on summits and photographing nature's beauty.

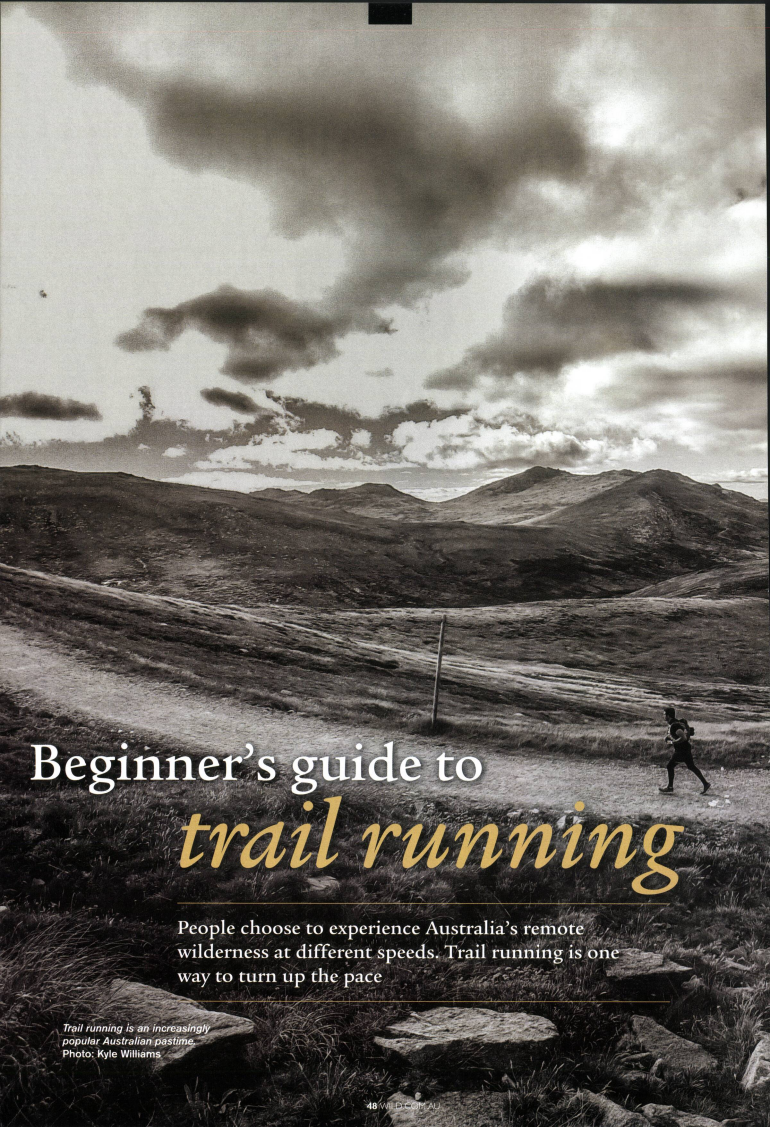
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View on the final walk out



The triumphant summitters soon after arrival



# Beginner's guide to *trail running*

People choose to experience Australia's remote wilderness at different speeds. Trail running is one way to turn up the pace

Trail running is an increasingly popular Australian pastime  
Photo: Kyle Williams





The activity can be undertaken as a competition or as a casual hobby.  
Photo: Sum8

**F**or me, trail running was a natural progression from hiking. I wanted to push the boundaries of how far I could travel in a certain timeframe with the freedom to move quickly, unencumbered by the weight of a heavy pack," says Henk Morgans, member of Australian alpine team Sum8.

For many people, running is an experience restricted to suburban parks or city footpaths. Walking, on the other hand, may be done anywhere, but bushwalking has a specific connotation. Not everyone takes the next step of extending their love of running into bush environments.

There are plenty of reasons why this may be the case. Firstly, running can be very hard on the body, and in a wilderness environment the risks of injury increase manifold. Other people may prefer to move slowly in the bush, even when on a clear track, to avoid the risk of disturbing wildlife and to allow themselves the time and space to fully absorb their surroundings.

Yet, looking after oneself, as well as respecting and observing the beauty of our natural spaces isn't the sole purview of the bushwalker. In fact, there are a variety of different health benefits associated with running and a number of ways in which trail runners have a lesser impact on the environment (for one, moving longer distances over the course of the day means less campsites within a given area).

If you're already a strong runner and have been looking for a new way to

view your favourite places, here are some ideas to get you started in trail running.

#### GETTING STARTED

For a trail run-specific training schedule, see Joe Bonington's column on page 54 of this magazine.

"I got started in trail running when my friend and fellow Sum8 teammate Dale Cokley approached me with an idea to start doing multiday hikes in a single day, seeing how far we could go when travelling light and fast," Morgans explains.

In this way, it's recommended that beginning trail runners seek out areas they're already familiar with, either because they're close to home or because you've walked the route previously. For avid alpine runner Kyle Williams, finding the next trail may be as simple as a quick online search.

"There are plenty of trails to be found via a quick Google search around any Australian town or city. The bigger, longer trails are generally found within National Parks."

If you have the fitness, the motivation and the ideal place to go on your first trail run, the next consideration is sourcing the right gear. As with the age-old discussion about which hiking boots are best, the fact is that everyone has slightly different tastes and requirements when it comes to their optimal equipment set. That being said, there are some basic items that anyone should consider before heading off on their first outing.

"Get yourself a pair of trail running shoes," recommends Williams. "Trail running shoes feature an aggressively lugged outsole that will allow you to negotiate trails and mud and other common obstacles Mother Nature may throw at you without fear of slipping. You can use regular running shoes when you start out, but the risk of falling over is much greater.

"Once you start going on longer runs (two hours or greater), invest in a good running vest. This is one of the best ways to carry all the gear you'll need for 'ultra' trail runs."

An adequate running vest will include sufficient pockets for snacks, water bottles and hydration bladders. As you would expect, staying adequately hydrated is a primary concern for trail runners.

"The cool thing about trail running is you need very limited gear," says Morgans.

"You could probably get away with a pair of running shoes, shorts and a t-shirt, small backpack for food and water and maybe a lightweight raincoat and emergency space blanket."

As with so many other wilderness activities, so much of a trail runner's planning comes down to expected weather conditions and the challenges presented by the terrain he or she intends to run in. If you're planning a multi-day running trip then you'll need to be even more careful in planning a lightweight shelter and adequate energy sources that don't take up much volume as well as mass. **W**



## RUNNER PROFILE: KYLE WILLIAMS

### EVENTS AND EXPEDITIONS:

- 82km ultra marathon across the Snowy Mountains, climbing highest 21 summits en route (2014)
- Highest mountain in each state and territory in fastest continuous time. 170km of trail running in 5 days, 23 hours and 35 minutes (2015)

### WISDOM:

"Research shows that 80 percent of runners will experience an injury at some point during any given year. Throughout the years, I have experienced the common injuries that nearly such as achilles tendonitis, iliotibial band syndrome (ITBS), and plantar fasciitis. All of these injuries were caused by trying to do too much running too soon before my body's soft-tissues (think tendons, fascia, ligaments) had adapted to the stress I was placing on it.

"Trail running should be a lifetime pursuit. Therefore, don't sell yourself short by going for the quick fix now. Be patient, progressive and consistent with your training. Start small and slowly build up and you will enjoy a pain-free experience for lifetime."



Williams under full power in the hot sun.



## GEAR ESSENTIALS FOR THE BEGINNER TRAIL RUNNER

**Trail runners** – Available in a wide variety of styles, trail runners need to strike a balance between comfort, weight and structural integrity. The latter is there to help minimise the risk of injury, but the degree to which it's required is very much a matter of individual preference and experience. Choose your trail runners according to your injury history, as well as what you find adequate in a runner. For more, see our Tried and Tested reviews on page 62.

*Pictured: Salomon Speedcross 3 – \$199*

**Athletic socks** – The sock is one of the most overlooked pieces of critical apparel. The ability to conform to your

feet and reduce moisture build up are the key factors most likely to influence your chance of getting blisters.

The more moisture, bunching and movement that occurs around your feet, the greater the amount of friction and subsequent blistering. Quick drying sock materials also reduce the risk of foot-based fungal infections.

*Pictured: Wilderness Wear Merino Multi Sport Socks – \$20.95*

**Gaiters** – This may not be an essential for those sticking to formed paths or open ground, but anyone considering a run in rougher conditions might consider a pair of running-specific gaiters to ensure added protection

of the lower leg. Gaiters also prevent unwanted materials or insects working their way into your socks and shoes. *Pictured: Rab Scree Gaiter – \$54.94*

**Running packs and vests** – Whether you opt for something that appears more like a traditional pack or a more modern harness-like vest will depend on how much you're planning to carry, as well as what you feel most comfortable in. Certainly, the movement towards running vests is a result of the more natural centre of gravity they provide, while a traditional pack alternative is likely to allow more storage capacity.

*Pictured: Osprey Rev 6 – \$129.95*

## RUNNER PROFILE: HENK MORGANS

### EVENTS AND EXPEDITIONS:

- 50k race events in Brisbane
- Highest mountain in each state and territory in fastest continuous time. 170km of trail running in 6 days, 21 hours and 30 minutes (2014)
- Regular climbing and mountaineering adventures in Australia and NZ

### WISDOM:

"The most common trail running injuries are simple strains or niggles to the ankle or knee. Realistically, taking a fall on the trail will leave you with some bark off either the elbows or knees, is also a fairly common occurrence when you're too busy looking at the view instead of where your feet should be going.

"I really love trail running for its simplicity and exploration values I wonder what's around the next corner. I wonder how far I can run today, or can I do this track quicker than last time? What wildlife will I see on my run tonight?"



Morgans and the Sum8 team in the Snowy Mountains



### Water capture and storage –

Hydration bladders and easy-to-store water bottles are all essential kit for the trail runner, but many will also carry filters and purifiers, allowing them to restock their water supply along the way. As with all other carried items, consideration should be given for volume and weight.

*Pictured: Platypus Meta Bottle with Micro Filter – \$119.95*

### First aid and toiletries – As

mentioned by our trail running experts, at the very least trail runners should consider carrying an emergency space blanket with them, but other first aid materials

should be considered in the case of an accident. Toiletries in the form of toilet paper, hand sanitiser and perhaps a small hand trowel should also be considered depending on the availability of toilets and any restrictions around these activities in the given area of running.

*Pictured: Coghlan's Emergency Blanket – \$5.95*

**Lighting** – Even if you're not planning to be out after dark, a 'better safe than sorry' ethos would dictate you consider a lightweight head torch. There are plenty to choose from, but we recommend looking for an option that has a low power mode that will

provide a weaker light over a longer period of time. You may need it to last an entire night, after all.

*Pictured: Petzl Reactik \$149.95*

### Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) –

Runners and other adventurers may choose to carry GPS devices along with the print maps and compass they use for navigation, but there is always the risk of getting lost or of serious injury. Whether you're running in a group or by yourself, be sure you have a registered PLB that you can use to signal the need for an evacuation if necessary.

*Pictured: ACR ResQLink+ PLB – \$419.95*



# Fantastic flowerings and where to find them

Annual mass flowering events are a spectacle to behold and anyone can enjoy them if they know where, and when, to look

As the name suggests, mass or synchronous flowering is a profusion of flowering in a population of plants. Many bushwalkers have been on pilgrimages to view carpets of Western Australian wildflowers, which seem to stretch unbroken into the far horizon. This phenomenon is more common in Australia than we might initially think. By understanding why it occurs we can gain more insight into where and when to look. I am not sure if there is a birder equivalent in the plant world, but I admit to being guilty of timing camping trips to coincide with flowering events.

## SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY ADOPTED BY MANY

Although you may not have seen it firsthand, you would have seen documentaries showing the spectacular coral-spawning phenomenon that occurs annually on the Great Barrier Reef. In this event, different species of coral simultaneously release reproductive material (on the same night!) in order for fertilisation to occur. Plants can be no less incredible in their race to reproduce.

Annual plants, such as daisies, are the most obvious type of plant to put on a mass flowering display, and for good reason. In the last issue I discussed why long-lived perennials are so successful in coping with Australia's harsh habitats, but annuals are also successful for a variety of reasons. Annuals are fast-growing to rapidly complete their life cycle, and generally produce large amounts of seeds to ensure future generations. They prosper in situations of high intensity disturbance and low intensity stress. They cope with harsh conditions by disappearing and surviving as a seed lying

dormant in the soil, often for years.

Perennial species are also capable of a mass-flowering event. In the alps, for example, perennial plants such as alpine daisies, eyebrights, candle heaths have only a few short months during summer in which to reproduce and they tend to all flower at once when the meagre warmth is at its highest, giving rise to famous alpine wildflower displays. Woody species such as acacias and peas can also flower in profusion, painting landscapes shades of yellow and orange. Dramatic grass trees also flower spectacularly and dramatically, sending up furry brown spikes more than a metre long that eventually become densely covered in creamy flowers.

## SAFETY IN NUMBERS

Mass flowering is caused by a very small window of opportunity in which the conditions are just right for certain plants to reproduce. Plants must attract pollinators to facilitate pollen sharing among individuals and ensure genetic transfer occurs. By flowering simultaneously, the energy involved in attracting pollinators is a shared investment. In the case of wind-pollinated plants (such as bamboo, and there is a native one), the more plants that flower together the greater the pollination success, which relies on unpredictable air movements.

Anyone who has grown corn at home learns that the more plants you plant, the better chance at producing full corn cobs you have.

Mass flowering species provide copious pollen and nectar to ensure enough pollinators are attracted to flowers. But this bounty can be a costly investment and can become a negative as the rapid lush growth and flowers can become food for predators,

so flowering en masse provides a safety in numbers to ensure survival of species even if the individual does not survive.

The seeds that are produced following flowering are also at the mercy of predators, such as native rodents, ants and seed eating birds like budgies and finches. So producing many seeds (actually called mass seeding) in a population of many plants is a necessity. Some species time their mass flowering and seeding so that it doesn't occur each year and predators that may come to rely on this food source are starved in low seed years. The investment in many seeds also means that there is more potential for those seeds being dispersed.

## RANGE OF TRIGGERS

Most commonly, a change in climate is responsible for mass flowering events. Rains in the arid interior can trigger rapid germination and growth of annuals. Flowering in desert landscapes is spectacular because of the striking contrast between a dry, seemingly lifeless state to one where carpets of flowers stretch to the far horizon. In arid areas, many species (not just plants) have 'boom and bust' lifecycles and these lifecycles are often interrelated. For example, rapid plant growth following rain may lead to an increase in insects, which in turn supports the increase of the native mouse population. This strategy also emphasises the importance of storing seed in the soil (in a seed bank) and therefore having long-lived, well-protected seeds. Seeds are capable of germinating within hours of rain; however a good soaking is needed in order to leach out the germination inhibitors that protect the seed against a false start caused by an errant light shower.



Due to its long influence over our flora, fire is a large trigger for mass flowering. The components of smoke, such as ethylene, trigger flowering and give rise to spectacular mass flowering events. The Austral grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea australis*), typical of heathlands in southeast Australia, rarely flowers from year to year, but six months after a summer fire, the entire population bursts into flower. But not all grass trees respond to fire in the same way. The grey grass tree, *X. glauca* ssp. *angustifolia*, is found in the dry box ironbark forest of inland Victoria. Fire is relatively uncommon in these forests and it is not known why this species flowers, but climate (perhaps dry or wet years) can lead to spectacular mass flowering in the absence of fire.

## TIMING

The unpredictability of mass flowering, due to the vagaries of the Australian climate and the sporadic nature of triggers such as fire, mean that planning a trip around these events can be challenging to say the least. Maybe it adds to the spontaneity of the activity.

In some areas, such as southern Western Australia, the wildflower displays are more regular and are often annual, triggered by the drought breaking autumn rains. A peak in flowering also occurs in southern Australia in late winter with wattles and peas mass flowering. This, in turn, results in a dramatic increase in nectar-feeding birds, such as honeyeaters and lorikeets that time nesting to coincide with flowering peak. So, in southern areas the change can be more subtle but no less impressive, and trips to

observe these events can yield interesting observations of not just plants.

Apiarists take advantage of seasonal and predictable peaks in flowering and move their hives to places with a high concentration of flowering plants. Because of this, and also because this knowledge is often accumulated over a long period of time and is passed from generation to generation, apiarists are great natural historians and know what flowers when and where in order for their bees to survive. They have contributed to the field of pollination biology range of flowering, by providing details on the start, peak and cessation of flowering dates of many eucalypt species.

Some plants don't mass flower every year, perhaps because they need to build up the energy reserves needed for reproduction. Snow-daisies (*Celmisia* species) flower profusely every five-seven years and this may not coincide with mass flowering of other species in the alps. Scientists are yet to unravel the reasons for this. It may be that a particular combination of conditions (e.g. decent winter rain, followed by a warm spring or early snowmelt) is needed and this might occur once every few years or even decades depending on the region and species involved.

## WHERE AND WHEN TO LOOK

The unpredictability of the triggers of mass flowering mean that "flower chasing" can be an interesting pursuit, which requires an observation of the climate and a degree of spontaneity. The response after rain in arid areas is much faster, so if you are chasing

desert wildflowers be prepared to act fast after reports of rain. There may be more time to plan a trip after a fire, since it may take a few months for plants to regenerate and then flower. In general, it is highly likely that there will be profuse flowering the spring after a fire, though this depends on the season when the fire occurred and the climate after the fire.

Some plant communities are more likely to support plants that tend to concentrate flowering at certain times of the year, for example, spring. So knowing which plant communities these are and where they are found is useful. Eucalypt forests with an understorey dominated by shrubs (heathy woodlands) are often in flower late winter and early spring (Grampians, Freycinet NPs). The box ironbark forests of Central Victoria are another good place for wildflowers in late winter and spring. Heathlands flower in spring and are often found in areas of sandy soil (Little Desert NP), and may also occur near the coast (Wilson's Prom, Ben Boyd, Royal NPs). Alpine areas show a peak in flowering in summer (January) when the days are longest and warmest and when insect pollinators are most active and abundant.

Whether the pursuit of mass flowering should be limited to natives is a thought-provoking question. Not everyone is botanically inclined and the casual observer may not realise that the field of Patterson's curse they are admiring is actually a noxious weed. Or perhaps they are so taken with the lurid yellow of a field of canola that they would hardly care whether it is native or not.

## DEFINITION AND SCALE

In order to make the pursuit of hunting for mass flowering accessible throughout Australia, the definition needs to be flexible and subjective. Beyond vistas filled to overflowing with wildflowers, subtle, smaller displays can be just as beautiful and rewarding to see. There can be an interesting contrast between a single species flowering en masse to a heathland in flower, with its incredible diversity of different flowers. By observing the different components of the heathland, you appreciate the detail of the diversity.

It is also a question of scale. Consider a cushion of carpet heath (*Pentachondra pumila*) covered in tiny white star-shaped flowers. Sitting next to it, observing those hundreds of flowers at eye level is no less beautiful than a vista of daisies in a desert. **W**



Milkwort sunray (*Rhodanthe polygalifolia*)  
at Pink Lakes, Murray-Sunset NP  
Photo: Michele Kohout

# Rigorous training for trail runners

**Joe Bonington returns with tips for runners seeking to accelerate their progress in the lead up to the event season**

While I mentioned the 'specific pause' as something I'd like to look, I'd like to divert for this issue to instead look at strength, conditioning and endurance training for the fastest growing wilderness sport: trail running. With a large amount of trail running-related material in this issue I think it's important we couple that with some useful information regarding activity-specific training.

The spring trail running season is coming up fast and more people than ever are hitting the track. Whether you are a seasoned trail runner or a novice, this sport is what wilderness adventure sports are all about. It has everything we love; a physical challenge, stunning natural environments, the simplicity the human body in nature and technical skills required to negotiate difficult tracks. It really is no wonder that trail running is

one of the fastest growing sports in Australia.

The advantages of trail running over its road running cousin are that, by nature, it requires a higher degree of coordination and agility, so helping to increase proprioception and spatial awareness. However, these benefits reveal the associated risk. Twisting turns, tree roots and uneven ground engender a higher risk of acute traumatic injury, such as a sprained or broken ankle.

As our Joe's Basecamp member and adventure-focused sports doctor, Jane Taylor of the Narrabeen Sports and Exercise Medicine Centre, says: "I feel the greatest benefit of trail running is in the variety of terrain. This reduces the risk of certain overuse injuries encountered with road running, improves proprioception and balance, building strength and stability into your running, apart from

that it's just great mental health space getting into the great outdoors."

So what is a trail run? It's basically anything off road, whether you are running deserts, mountains, open heathland, sclerophyll forest or sandstone gorges. It's running where, on another day, you might trek or hike.

Many reasonably fit beginners would start with a five-kilometre run, before building up to 20 or 30 kilometres. From there, the serious runner might begin looking at 'Ultra Trail' lengths of 50 to 100 kilometres. There are also multi-stage events such as the 250-kilometre Big Red Run. Internationally you might look at the daring Marathon des Sables – 250-kilometres through the Sahara Desert.

To get you started, I've included a 14-week training plan that caters for an intermediate-level runner (someone who runs two or three times per week) who

| DAY               | MON         | TUES                    | WED                  | THU                     | FRI            | SAT                     | SUN       |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| MODE              | RUN         | STRENGTH & CONDITIONING | RUN (SPEED OR HILLS) | STRENGTH & CONDITIONING | RUN            | RUN (LONG)              | REST DAY  |
| INTENSITY         | EASY EFFORT | N/A                     | HARD EFFORT          | N/A                     | EASY EFFORT    | EASY-TO-MODERATE EFFORT | N/A       |
| HEART RATE        | 65-75%      | N/A                     | 80-90%               | N/A                     | 65-75%         | 70-75%                  | N/A       |
| WEEK 1            | 75 min      | 45-60 min               | Speed                | 45-60 min               | 45min          | 11km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 2            | 75 min      | 45-60 min               | Speed                | 45-60 min               | 45min          | 13km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 3            | 75 min      | 45-60 min               | Speed                | 45-60 min               | 30 min (speed) | 15km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 4            | 75 min      | 45-60 min               | Hills                | 30-45 min               | 45 min         | 16km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 5<br>Deload  | 75 min      | 30 min<br>Stretch       | Rest                 | 30 min                  | 30 min Stretch | 10km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 6            | 85 min      | 45-60 min               | Hills                | 45-60 min               | 30min (speed)  | 17km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 7            | 75 min      | 30-45 min               | Speed                | 30-45 min               | 45 min         | 12km (race pace)        | REST      |
| WEEK 8            | 85 min      | 45-60 min               | Hills                | 45-60 min               | 45 min         | 18km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 9            | 85 min      | 45-60 min               | Hills                | 45-60 min               | 30 min (speed) | 19km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 10<br>Deload | 80 min      | 30 min<br>Stretch       | Rest                 | 30 min                  | 30 min Stretch | 15km (race pace)        | REST      |
| WEEK 11 Peak      | 90 min      | 45-60 min               | Hills                | 45-60 min               | 45 min         | 21km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 12 Taper     | 75 min      | 45-60 min               | Hills                | 45-60 min               | 30 min (speed) | 16km                    | REST      |
| WEEK 13 Taper     | 75 min      | 40 min                  | Speed                | 40 min                  | 30 min         | 10km (race pace)        | REST      |
| WEEK 14 Event     | 1h          | Rest                    | 30 min (Fartlek)     | Rest                    | Rest           | 15-20 min               | Event Day |

wishes to prepare for a trail running event.

Every fifth week is what we call a deload week. This is a week where we take the foot off the gas and allow the body to catch up with our progressive strengthening, as well as accommodating the neural and physical adaptations that have been going on.

Deloading is really, very important and stops us from becoming fatigued and protects us from the risks associated with overtraining.

When training for trail running, there are several areas we need to focus on more so than with road running.

**1. Leg strength** – The steep hills and steps on a single trail or mountain run loads the untrained legs with lactate, making them heavy and harder to move. We use MSP training (maximum sustained power) combined with what we call clearance runs to teach the body how to have the strength to carry the weight of the body uphill repeatedly and then clear the lactate quickly, so your running speed doesn't deteriorate too much.

**2. Stabilisation** – You will be running on uneven surfaces often for long periods of time and in states of fatigue. We want to strengthen all the supporting muscles that help stabilise the joints through movement, so we can perform better for longer and also reduce the risk of injury

**3. Reactive speed** – Gnarly tree roots, steps, bumps and stones bring a much greater risk of acute trauma. We need to speed up our reaction times. Being able to catch yourself in a stumble can mean the difference between a rolled ankle and a face plant or finishing the race.

**4. Core stability** – The core is the centre of everything. Without a strong core everything else comes unstuck, especially in endurance. The core is controlled by 'tonic' muscles; these muscles must stay switched on and active for long periods of time to support our skeletal system. Nine times out of ten if a trail runner complains of a tight back after going uphill for sustained periods of time, it's because of a weak core and poor stabilization.

## SAMPLE STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING (S&C) SESSIONS

### MAXIMUM SUSTAINED POWER SESSIONS

How to do MSP training, this is done with big lower body movements such as the squat

### BARBELL BACK SQUAT or BACKPACK SQUAT

Find a weight you can lift roughly five times... just. From now on DO NOT change the weight.

#### SET 1

Do as many repetitions of it as you can WITHOUT failing.

Put the bar down, rest 20 seconds and repeat.

Keep on doing this until you can only do one repetition without failing.

Essentially you will have completed many mini-sets. There are no set number of repetitions you should have completed, just stick to the 'don't fail' rule and rest for 20 seconds each time until you can't do any more.

Rest for 3-5 minutes before moving to Set 2.

#### SET 2

Lower the weight by 10-15 percent and repeat Set 1.

Rest for 3-5 minutes.

#### SET 3

Lower the weight by 10-15 and repeat as before.

Once you have completed this, go for a 2-3km run at a zone 1 pace (heart rate: 180 – your age). This will help your body learn to clear lactate efficiently.

### STABILISATION, REACTIVE AND CORE SESSIONS

When running, we spend up to 80 percent of our time on one leg. This is reflected through these sessions:

#### FRONT FOOT RAISED SPLIT SQUAT

**Focus:** Glutes and quads (stabilise and strengthen the hip and lifting the leg and VMO (vastus medialis obliquus, which stabilises the knee).

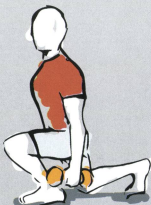
Standing in a lunge position, the front foot is elevated on a block or rock. Keep body tight and upright. Slowly drift forward as far as you can, so that the knee ends up over or in front of the toe, while



BACKPACK SQUAT

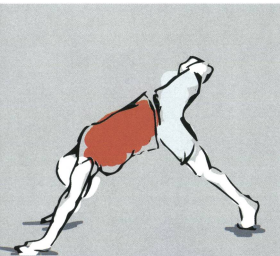


MONSTER WALK

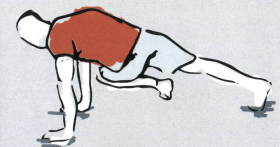


SPLIT SQUAT

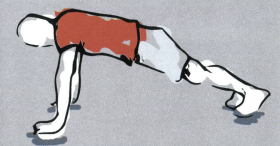




THIRD POSITION



SECOND POSITION



FIRST POSITION - SCORPION

keeping the heel down. Then push backwards. You may carry weights or a weighted backpack to add load and resistance.

3 sets of 5-7 reps.

#### SINGLE LEG DEADLIFT

**Focus:** Integrated glute and hamstring strength, as well as hip stability.

Standing on the left leg, weight in right hand with a straight leg, focus on lifting the heel of the right leg behind you, forcing your upper body forward and down.

It's really important to focus on this rather than bending forwards.

Go as far as the hamstring will allow, i.e. until you feel a good stretch down the back of the leg and then stand up again.

3 sets of 8-12 reps each side.

#### MONSTER WALK

**Focus:** Gluteus maximus and gluteus medius, which between them drive you up hills and helps stabilise the hips.

Have a resistance band around your ankles, stepping forward and out to the left side with your left leg. Bring your right leg up to level with your left before stepping out diagonally to the right.

Do 10 steps forward, then reverse it so that you do exactly the same thing but backwards.

3 sets 10 forwards and 10 backwards.

#### TIGHTROPE WALK

**Focus:** Glutes max and med, proprioception and sensory receptors stabilising the hips.

Again, use a resistance band around the ankles. Imagine you are walking on a tight rope (it helps to walk along a visible line). Lift your right leg out to your side in a curve then put it down in front of your left foot. Alternating the legs, 30 steps forward and 30 steps backwards.

3 sets: 40 forward and 30 back

#### ROPE HOPS

**Focus:** Balance, reactive speed, deceleration, elastic strength and plyometric power.

Use rope, walking poles, skipping ropes or a line on the ground.

Jump from side to side along the length of the line and back again, trying to jump as far as you can and with as much force, but stopping and stabilising without putting your other foot down on each hop. Try and vary the angles with which

you jump and the distance.

Advanced – try different heights as well.

3 sets of 10-15 jumps for each leg.

#### SCORPION

**Focus:** Integrated core stability through movement.

Hold a plank position then draw left knee under the body and towards your right shoulder. Then take leg back out and over the body so it looks like a scorpion's tail. All movements are slow and controlled.

Repeat 5-10 times on each side. 3 sets, 5-10 reps each side.

#### HOLLOW HOLD

**Focus:** Core stability.

Lying on your back, push your lower back into the ground with hands at your sides, lifting shoulders and feet off the ground and getting the bottom of the ribs and the top of the hips closer together.

Hold intensely for 8-12 seconds.

To make it harder raise your hands above your head.

5 sets of 8-12 seconds each.

Once you have got this, try 5 sets of 12-20 and so on until you can hold for 1 set of a minute and then 3 sets of a minute each.

Do make sure that you check with a health practitioner or highly trained coach/trainer to make sure you have no underlying health or biomechanical issues before starting a program like this.

Remember, we choose to run in the wilderness because we love the environment we run in. Look after it and treat it with respect. Before going on a trail run, let someone know your plans and if you are going remote make sure you are properly equipped (take a space blanket, just in case).

Beyond that – happy running! I look forward to seeing you out there on the trail. **W**



Joe Bonington is a strength and conditioning expert, specialising in wilderness adventure activities and expeditions. As the owner of Joe's Basecamp Gym on

Sydney's northern beaches, he's able to share his expertise with new generations of outdoor enthusiasts and invites you to contact him with suggestions for future topics for his columns, or any specific questions you may have.



[joe@joesbasecamp.com.au](mailto:joe@joesbasecamp.com.au)

# Canoeing 101: Outfitting

If you're a recent convert to the open canoe, **Stuart Matheson's** has a few suggestions for customisations prior to hitting the water

So what do you need to get started, and what are those little ideas that can make all open canoeing adventures safer, easier and more enjoyable?

Some pieces of equipment that are definitely essential, such as the canoe itself. Also, you don't want to be 'up the creek without a paddle' so we should certainly have one of those as well. There is a whole selection of other safety equipment, some of which could be termed as essential and others that are at the least highly desirable.

The way in which you set up and customise a canoe is a personal choice (it can spark heated debate among avid open boaters), therefore this article should be taken more as inspirational than dictatorial.

## EQUIPMENT – ESSENTIALS AND DESIRABLES

**Open Canoe** – They come in many shapes, sizes and materials, a 15 or 16-foot classic design (prospector or similar) will give you the freedom and versatility to paddle a vast range of environments, essentially those that come 'off the shelf' ready to paddle. A little outfitting and a few additions can allow you to get more out of them and be safer as you do it (more on outfitting to come).

**Paddles** – Again you can select from a range of materials, designs and sizes. When paddling in flat water or touring environments, a classic wooden paddle is an excellent choice as it is not only efficient in regards to strength and weight but has a pleasant feel to paddle with. A more robust material may be required for rocky areas or white water use.

**PFD** – A PFD (personal flotation device) often referred to as a life jacket is a really good idea, modern PFDs designed for paddlesport activities are designed to allow you to paddle unhindered and to aid swimming if you end up in the water. As a bonus they also provide extra insulation and warmth.

**Bailer** – If you end up with water in your boat it is always good to have a method of removing it, a bailer can be as simple as a small bucket, I currently use a large empty plastic milk bottle with the bottom cut off, it's high tech as it has a built in handle.



## OUTFITTING – THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

**Air bags** – In my opinion, having air bags fitted at the bow and stern is essential, they will provide additional flotation should you capsize your canoe or get it swamped with water. The additional flotation provided should allow you to re-enter the canoe and bail it out or paddle it swamped to the shore for emptying. If you go without air bags the inherent buoyancy of the boat will mean it won't sink completely but it will not be able to be paddled if swamped.

The additional bonus of air bags is found on white water, where they help prevent damage to the boat if capsized, they do this by displacing lots of water which makes the boat lighter and less likely to wrap around a rock!

**Lash kit** – To keep the air bags in place you will need to tie them down in some manner. Like many people, I have drilled holes and threaded strong cord in a line parallel to the gunnels; this allows me to tie down my air bags with more cord laced through and across the top of them (they are also tied against the bow/stern).

**Bow/Stern strong points** – It can be very handy to have a strong point or rope loop at the bow and stern of the boat, as this can enable you to do lots of things, such as tie the boat up, receive a tow from another boat, line and track the boat through shallow water or unpin the boat on white water. This strong point/rope loop can be created by drilling through the bow and stern before inserting a piece of rope to create the loop. The hole should be drilled with enough space from the bow or stern to ensure there is enough strength, and the loop should be small so that hands or arms can't become trapped (the shaped handles at the bow and stern are part of the gunnels, which are only pop-riveted on and may pull off under force).

**Painter** – If you attach a three-metre-or-so-long piece of floating rope to your bow strong point then you will have a handy line (known as a painter) for tying the boat up, being towed, or as a grab/swim line should you capsize.

**Swim tails** – A couple of short pieces of tape sling tied to the bow and stern strong point will provide an easy place to hold on for any swimmers you are helping.

**Kneeling thwart** – Sometimes you will kneel in your canoe, sometimes you will sit on the seats. It depends on where you are paddling and what you are trying to achieve. By kneeling, you lower the centre of gravity and maintain better connectivity with the boat, the people you see looking effortless and paddling with style and finesse are likely to be kneeling. Kneeling can be made more comfortable with a kneeling thwart. The thwart is angled and positioned to support some of your weight.

**Bang plates** – To offer some protection in high abrasion areas many canoeists will attach bang plates to the keel at the bow and stern, bang plates are just a tough material (often Kevlar) that has been shaped then resined or glued into place, they can be used to fix the boat after it has suffered wear but are far better used to protect the boat before it gets worn out.

Fitting out and customising your canoe can become one of those continuous projects, making those fine adjustments and getting all your systems just 'perfect' has been known to become an obsession, for some this is all part of the fun and achievement of open canoeing, there are loads of concepts and ideas out there to try out and play with. Read, experiment, adjust and maybe you'll come up with the next system that is all the rage. **W**

**Adventure**  
TRAINING CONSULTANTS  
western Australia & beyond

Operated by **Stuart Matheson**, Adventure Training Consultants provides training, coaching, guiding and technical advice services for all aspects of outdoor education and adventure activities throughout Australia.



adventuretrainingconsultants.com.au

# Nutritious dips and spreads

*Andrew Davison* recalls being inspired in Kakadu by his companion's selection of dried dips

**I**t was a leisurely weekend in Kakadu National Park and I was to be treated. For perhaps the first time on any walking trip I have organised, I was not to partake in the planning of the menu. I was to be inspired by my Kiwi walking companion's tramping menu, and I was not to be disappointed.

The memorable lunch was had beside a cool stream, under the spreading shade of a paperbark. Sophie retrieved a number of

containers and resealable bags from her pack and placed them on the slab of stone between us. She put small quantities of water in a number of the containers and stirred until the contents became a familiar selection of dips that to be spread on a biscuit and topped with sundried tomato, pitted olives and sprinkled with dukkha. Other containers were filled with pre-made, high-energy spreads more suited to the sweeter palate, but none the less delicious.

## HUMMUS

Hummus is a well-known dip that is excellent to take on a walk as a lunch spread for biscuits or bread. It is most convenient when dehydrated, then a little can be easily rehydrated in the field by simply adding water. I find most of the store bought hummus does not dry well due to the high oil content and added emulsifiers. Below is a traditional Lebanese style hummus that does not have oil and dries easily. Once dried, place in a food processor to create a powder, this allows for very fast and simple rehydration in the field.

## INGREDIENTS

150g dried chickpeas or 2 x 400g tin of chickpeas drained and rinsed  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
1 teaspoon of salt  
100g or ½ cup of tahini  
juice of ½ a lemon or to taste  
ground cumin to taste  
paprika to taste

## AT HOME

Soak dried chickpeas in a bowl of water overnight. Drain the chickpeas and place in a saucepan well covered with fresh water and allow to simmer for an hour or until the chickpeas are soft. Drain but reserve the cooking liquid.

Place the cooked chickpeas, garlic and salt in a food processor and process until a crumbled paste begins to form. Now add the tahini followed by the lemon, and then slowly add some of the reserved cooking liquid until it becomes a creamy puree. Season to taste (ground cumin and paprika can also be added at this stage, however I prefer to sprinkle it over the hummus when served).

Spread the prepared hummus on a solid sheet and dry in a dehydrator or the oven, once completely dried place into a food processor and process until it resembles a powder.

## IN THE FIELD

Place the desired amount of dried hummus powder into a small bowl and slowly add water continually mixing until reaching desired consistency.





## CANNELLINI AND ANCHOVY DIP

This dip works equally as well as hummus when dried and reconstituted. Like hummus, it can be served with olives and dried tomatoes; it also works equally well topped with a slice of parmesan cheese and a few slithers of the rind of a preserved lemon.

### INGREDIENTS

100g dried cannellini beans  
or a 400g tin drained and rinsed  
50g tin of anchovies in oil  
1 clove of garlic  
Salt and pepper to taste

### METHOD

Soak dried cannellini beans in a bowl of water overnight. Drain the beans and place in a saucepan well covered with

fresh water and allow to simmer for approximately two hours or until the beans are soft. Drain and reserve the cooking liquid.

Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until it becomes a creamy paste (you may need to add a little of the reserved cooking liquid if it seems a little dry).

Spread the prepared dip on a solid sheet and dry in a dehydrator or the oven, once completely dried place into a food processor and process until it resembles a powder.

### IN THE FIELD

Place the desired amount of dried cannellini and anchovy powder into a small bowl and slowly add water continually mixing until reaching desired consistency.

## FIG, NUT AND SEED JAM

A sweeter, energy-packed spread served as an addition to lunch or topped with cheese or dried sausage.

### INGREDIENTS

200g of dried figs (approximately 10 figs)  
50g or ¼ cup of sugar  
70g or ½ a cup of your favourite nuts (a combination of almond and walnuts are my preferred mix for this jam)  
40g or ¼ cup of sunflower kernels

### AT HOME

Chop figs into small pieces, place in a pan with the sugar and a cup of water, bring to the boil then reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes.

Lightly toast sunflower kernels in a dry frypan, place in a food processor with the nuts, pulse three or four times to lightly crush them. It's ok to have some large pieces remaining as this adds texture to the jam. After the 30 minutes of simmering, add the nuts to the figs, stir through, cover and allow to gently simmer for a further 30 minutes (you may need to add a further quarter cup of water at this stage). Remove the lid and allow remaining liquid to evaporate. Transfer into sterile jars and store in the fridge until required, then transfer the desired amount into a light container for your walk.



Andrew Davison takes pleasure in the simplicity of being in the bush. A world traveller and culinary connoisseur, he has become a regular *Wild* contributor.

Stay warm this winter.



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**1 Rush Shell Jacket \$899**

Three different Gore-Tex fabrics are used to create a fully waterproof shell from Arc'teryx, including two zippered hand pockets, and internal dump pocket and a helmet-compatible 'stormhood'. [www.arcteryx.com](http://www.arcteryx.com)

**2 Iota Headlamp \$79.95**

All-new super lightweight headlamp from Black Diamond offering 150 lumens over an average burn time of 3hrs. IPX4 water resistance and just 56g. Available in 4 colours. [www.blackdiamond.com](http://www.blackdiamond.com)

**3 Water Cube from \$15.50**

A foldable water container designed for camping or adventure use from GSI. The integrated handle and ergonomic tap deliver a high flow rate of water. [www.spellean.com.au](http://www.spellean.com.au)

**4 Amphibian \$399**

Australian watchmaker Adina has designed a robust, Nickel-free casing faced in Sapphire crystal and water resistant to 200m, designed with divers in mind. [www.adinawatches.com.au](http://www.adinawatches.com.au)

**5 Daylite Pack from \$69.95**

Versatile daypack from Osprey at an affordable price point. These packs can be used as a separate top pack or attached to a number of the brand's larger packs. [www.ospreypacks.com](http://www.ospreypacks.com)

**6 Hoody Nano Puff Jacket \$329.95**

Windproof and water-resistant, the new Nano Puff hoody jacket from Patagonia uses a highly compressible, 60g loft that's also partially recycle synthetic in a 100% recycled shell and lining. [www.patagonia.com.au](http://www.patagonia.com.au)

**7 Cyrus Mid GTX \$299.95**

Available in men's and women's models, this Scarpa boot incorporates a classic profile, 2mm water-resistant nubuck upper with a Gore-Tex lining to keep your feet dry and supported. [www.outdooragencies.com.au](http://www.outdooragencies.com.au)

**8 TMIH5 Mash-up \$149.95**

Guaranteed for life, the world-renowned Tilley brand offers this hat in a broad range of sizes. It includes an anti-sweat headband, secret pocket and it floats! [www.spellean.com.au](http://www.spellean.com.au)

**9 Ossa Women's Sleeping Bag \$749.95**

The women's equivalent of the popular Brindabella, this sleeping bag is versatile and warmth-rated down to -10°C. Weighing 1100g with 785-850 loft down in a water-resistant shell. [www.mont.com](http://www.mont.com)

**10 Rydr Pant \$129.95**

Anatomically cut, gusseted crotch and articulated knees mean better fit and flexibility, while reinforced high wear zones make these pants from Kühl ideal for outdoor use. [www.paddyhallin.com.au](http://www.paddyhallin.com.au)

**11 Super Dry 16 Fleece Jacket \$219.95**

Snug-fitting, flexible layering jacket designed to be warm, breathable and quick drying. It includes a removable hood, raglan sleeves and thumb loops. [www.mountaindesigns.com](http://www.mountaindesigns.com)

**12 Second Arrow \$799**

Compact, 2-person, double-skinned expedition tent from Wilderness Equipment designed for ultra-light travel in snow and severe weather. Enhanced flow-through ventilation also makes it suitable year-round. [www.wildernessequipment.com.au](http://www.wildernessequipment.com.au)



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#### 13 B-line Riding Pack \$229.95

This low-profile and women-specific pack from Platypus includes a ventilating back panel, 5L gear storage, 3L hydration, helmet carry, internal tool organization and hip belt pockets. [www.spelean.com.au](http://www.spelean.com.au)

#### 14 Butters Insulated Jacket \$359.95

Ski jacket shell with DWR finish and synthetic insulation to provide warmth in wet conditions. It offers a number of pockets and a removable hood. [www.mountainsdesigns.com](http://www.mountainsdesigns.com)

#### 15 Adventure Light Pants \$119.95

Available in-store and online, Mont's hardwearing, lightweight and quick drying adventure pants are suited to bushwalking and adventure travel. Made from Supplex Nylon. [www.mont.com](http://www.mont.com)

#### 16 Soyourn from \$379.95

The Soyourn range from Osprey is designed for travel use so you can either roll it or use the adjustable suspension to carry it like a backpack. Multiple sizes and colours available. [www.ospreypacks.com](http://www.ospreypacks.com)

#### 17 E Motion Trail M2 V3 \$209

Aggressive carbon rubber outsole with rock plate make these lightweight runners extra-sturdy for use over rough terrain. Medium-wide forefoot and medium cushioning. [www.pearlizi.com.au](http://www.pearlizi.com.au)

#### 18 Nano Puff Vest \$199.95

The eco-friendly Nano Puff range has been revamped to be lighter and made from more recycled materials. This vest weighs just 206g with a 22D shell in DWR finish. [www.patagonia.com.au](http://www.patagonia.com.au)

#### 19 Adventure Light Shorts \$89.95

The short version of Mont's Adventure Light Pants, these are an essential inclusion for the walker's wardrobe in the spring and summer months. [www.mont.com](http://www.mont.com)

#### 20 Siouxon \$289.95

Designed for MTB and also including a women-specific shape, this Platypus pack combines 3L hydration with 7L of storage, an integrated rain-cover and 2 pump sleeves. [www.spelean.com.au](http://www.spelean.com.au)

#### 21 Borneo Trail Running Sock \$29.95

BRBL's unique sock design means a snugger fit around the foot and a double layer to reduce friction. All up it's more breathability with less blisters. [www.brbl-apparel.com](http://www.brbl-apparel.com)

#### 22 Downcore Puff Jacket \$269.95

500-loft consisting of 80% down and 20% feather fill in a nylon outer combines in this technical winter jacket from Vigilante. The whole thing packs down into a travel-size pillow. [www.vigilante.com.au](http://www.vigilante.com.au)

#### 23 Moondance 2-FN \$749.95

The popular Moondance 2 has been given a full Nylon interior, raised tub floor height, improved roof vents and a simplified system to store guy cords. Weight: 2.2kg, 3-4 season. [www.mont.com](http://www.mont.com)

#### 24 Spartan Sport \$779.99

Designed with athletic performance in mind, the new range of Suunto Spartans offer tracking metrics for 80 different sports and up to 26 hours battery life in training mode. [www.suunto.com/spartan](http://www.suunto.com/spartan)





## TRIED AND TESTED

# If you're inspired to try trail running, but not sure your threadbare pair of Dunlop Volleys will see you through, here's a range of fit-for-purpose products to get yourself adequately shod

## INTRODUCTION

The running shoe, like so many other products, has evolved and diversified greatly in the past few decades. For the most part this is driven by innovations in materials technology as well as the precepts of consumerism, but in many cases this is justified. When it comes to hiking boots, you want to select a pair that suits your individual needs, simply because it's such an integral piece of kit. There are few items you will use more throughout the course of a journey than your shoes, and if you're thinking of running over rough terrain then the shoes become even more critical. After all, the forces of shock and torsion that occur during running are many times higher than those present at

walking pace.

When it comes to advising which shoes to buy, we could get bogged down in discussions of various midsole and tread synthetics, as well as arguments about which cushioning technology is superior – but when it comes to running shoes, personal preference seems to matter a lot more than any objective measure can account for. That being said, there are a few critical factors that will help narrow down your options, with the most important being fit. Be sure to spend at least five or ten minutes whenever trying on a new shoe.

## NOTES

**On fit** – Running shoes of any description should be tried on with

a sock that represents the average thickness of the socks you intend to wear with them. Regardless of whether you're growing or not, allow for a half-thumb to a thumb's-width in length beyond the end of your longest toe. Your feet will swell as you run and permanent damage can occur to toes that jam against the end of the shoe. Ensure shoes fit firmly across the laces and that your heel is held firmly in place. People with wide forefeet should ask if the model they're interested in is available in multiple widths.

**On 'support'** – You could visit a dozen different podiatrists and physios and each would have a different opinion on the effectiveness of built-in structural



support in a shoe. Certainly, if you've been prescribed an orthotic to use even while running, you will need to consider a shoe with a wide enough last (or base) to accommodate it. However, whether or not you need a shoe specifically designed for under or over pronators will depend much more on what you've found works for you in the past. Generally speaking, the majority of people are best off selecting a 'neutral' shoe, which describes the majority of those reviewed in this article.

**On durability and 'wearing in' –** Most modern performance shoes use all-synthetic textiles and, as

such, can't be expected to 'mould' to the foot over time like a leather product would. In saying that, synthetics do slowly breakdown, which explains why your running shoes will still go through a period of feeling firm, becoming softer and then progressing to a completely worn-out, tired feel. For a regular runner, this process usually takes no longer than 12 months, yet some people may find they get further use out of the shoes because they don't require much in the way of structure or support. People who prefer a firmer, more cushioned feel should consider replacing their shoes at least one a year.

**On water resistance and waterproof uppers –** A holdover from hiking boots, some consumers prefer their trail runners to repel water to varying degrees. While in theory this would make sense, in reality the more water resistant a shoe is, the less breathable it is. This results in the ironic situation where your feet end up more wet from sweating than they would from puddles and wet grass. Unless you have a very specific reason for choosing a waterproof or water resistant shoe (running in sub-zero temperatures), we recommend choosing something that heroes a moisture-wicking quality instead.

| Brand       | Model                                 | Ideal for                 | Weight (avg pair)  | Price    |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| La Sportiva | Bushido                               | Trail events, ultra       | 610g (M), 496g (W) | \$219.95 |
| La Sportiva | Helios 2.0                            | Trail events              | 460g (M), 400g (W) | \$189.95 |
| Merrell     | Trail Glove 3 (Pace Glove in women's) | Fast hiking, trail events | 397g (M), 328g (W) | \$149.95 |
| Merrell     | All Out Crush Tough Mudder            | Muddy terrain             | 454g (M), 397g (W) | \$179.95 |
| Merrell     | Moab FST Waterproof                   | Hiking, alpine trail      | 796g (M), 666g (W) | \$249.95 |
| Salomon     | Wings Pro 2                           | Trail events              | 675g (M), 590g (W) | \$219.99 |
| Saucony*    | Peregrine 6                           | All rounder               | 532g (M), 482g (W) | \$220.00 |
| Saucony     | Nomad TR                              | All rounder               | 522g (M), 460g (W) | \$200.00 |
| Scarpa      | Proton                                | Alpine trail              | 690g (M), 588g (W) | \$229.95 |

\* Not pictured.





## LA SPORTIVA

A European specialty alpine brand, La Sportiva was born in the Dolomites, Italy. While the brand is perhaps best known for its footwear, it also produces a sizeable range of apparel in the fields of running, hiking, climbing and snow sports. When it comes to trail runners, La Sportiva is generally considered a technical specialist, offering a product that's well suited to a serious user who wants to take their running game to that next level.

### 1. Bushido

This is a shoe designed for what's described as 'technical' terrain in the industry, and that loosely translates as 'anathema to ankle integrity'. These shoes will handle loose rocks and gravel, uneven surfaces and tree roots with aplomb, which thoroughly impressed our testers. This is achieved through a TPU frame that

wraps under the foot, in combination with the moderately aggressive lugs that ride up on the shoe's midsole. However, what the shoe achieves in structure it lacks in cushioning, with our testers finding it fairly firm under foot when running on hard surfaces.

### 2. Helios 2.0

The Helios 2.0 has been updated for comfort and breathability, which we think are both critical factors for choosing a shoe of any kind. This particular model is slightly shallower than the Bushido and includes a fast lacing system to get them on and off in event situations, which it is designed for over short to mid-distances. Our testers found it surprisingly comfortable compared to other models with traction control similar underfoot to the Bushido, but without the additional lugs coming up onto the sides.

## MERRELL

Founded by bootmaker Randy Merrell in 1981, Merrell has been a household hiking boot brand in the States ever since. As the industry has grown, so has the brand, slowly expanding into a plethora of footwear categories, including trail running. We had the benefit of trialling three very different Merrell shoes in this review, each one with a very different target customer.

### 3. Trail Glove 3

As its name suggests, this shoe presents more as a glove than as a traditional shoe, with very little in the way of midsole cushioning. This would be a tough shoe to wear on firm, flat surfaces, and some wearers would feel strange wearing it even while on the trail. However, with a bit of time to adjust our testers found this shoe felt more supportive in spite of the





extremely low profile. The general verdict here is not to judge a book by its cover.

#### 4. All Out Crush Tough Mudder

As the name would suggest, Merrell has created this model of shoe in partnership with Tough Mudder to create something suited to that style of obstacle course event. In saying that, the shoes are nevertheless wearable in just about any trail scenario, boasting a lightweight design with very aggressive lugs to carry you through slippery conditions. The downside of such aggressive lugs, particularly combined with the under foot protective pad, is that they can be uncomfortable on flat, firm ground. People who have worn football boots on concrete will be familiar with the sensation. As always, consider the right shoe for the right purpose. If you like wet weather, off-road racing, this could be your ideal shoe.

#### 5. Moab FST Waterproof

We trialled these shoes while running but found them just as suitable for hiking purposes – and they do come in a mid-cut profile for additional ankle support for those who need it. As such, this shoe aims to straddle the boundary between trail runner and hiking shoe, and it certainly feels more suited to alpine use. We found the waterproof version to be very warm to wear, but there is a non-waterproof version available for the user to consider.

#### SALOMON

Originally a family-owned business from France, Salomon has since grown to become a household name in Europe and beyond. Once renowned for its superior skis and bindings, the company produces products for running, hiking,

climbing and snow sports. Once owned by Adidas, it has since been acquired by the Finland-based Amer Sports company. We received two pairs of the performance-level Wings Pro 2 shoe to trial.

#### 6. Wings Pro 2

As expected, the Wings Pro 2 typifies the trail runner category, particularly at the performance end of the market. The balance of grip, structure, moderate cushioning and fast lacing creates a shoe that most would find hard to fault in a trail running scenario. Interestingly, they have a higher profile than many of the competitors, which may equate to greater ankle support. The only obvious downside is that they are a little heavier than most of the others trialled, but the difference wasn't noticeable while wearing them.



## SAUCONY

Founded in 1898, Saucony is a US-based shoe brand most well known for its running shoes. Unlike the majority of the other brands tested, Saucony is not particularly renowned for its trail runners, yet given the chance to try out two distinct options in the category we leapt at the chance. The results were surprising and testament to the fact that getting the basics of a shoe right is the most important thing to consider.

### 7. Peregrine 6

With slightly more cushioning than many of the competitors, this shoe appears a little chunkier. However this doesn't appear to have contributed to a difference in terms of weight. Saucony have specifically designed it to have a more flexible midsole, while a protective plate prevents rough rock from jabbing

into your feet. Despite the aggressive-seeming lugs, they feel more like a running shoe than many others. A lack of water resistance means the shoes are still fairly breathable.

### 8. Nomad TR

A little less cushion than the Peregrine gives this shoe more of a 'traditional' trail shoe feel, being slightly firmer under the foot. Saucony have also provided what it calls an 'oblique' toe box, which gives a little more room for all of your toes. This feature was greatly appreciated by testers used to getting blisters on the sides of their big or little toes.

## SCARPA

Also founded in the mountains of Italy, Scarpa has a history in quality hiking boots that goes back to the late 1930s.

As with so many other brands it has since diversified into a number of product categories, but its footwear still stays very faithful to the core principles set out by Parilotto family, who have owned the company since 1956.

### 9. Proton

If Salomon's Wings Pro 2 is the ultimate all-rounder for trail running events, Scarpa's Proton has to be the best all-rounder for everything else trail running. A more aggressive outsole and traditional lace set lend it to long, alpine runs and there is a Gore-Tex version for those who wish to have the waterproofing element. Our testers found the upper around the toes to feel quite stiff to begin with, but this softened over the course of the first run. They also achieved the 'normal' running shoe feel when worn on the trail.



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# Lavender Federation Trail

*Michelle Ryan* shares her recent experiences of rural South Australia while walking the Lavender Federation Trail

"I'm walking the Lavender Federation Trail", I would answer when asked what my next big walk would be. No one had heard of this trail – to be honest nor had I and I've been walking in Australia for quite some time now. I came across this trail in early 2015 when looking for a new adventure to finish off the hiking season. I had a great year, with my husband and I just recently returned from hiking 950 kilometres along the Via Francigena in Italy and while laid up in bed with the flu, the planning had begun.

The Lavender Federation Trail is a 212-kilometre hiking trail that starts on the beautiful banks of the Murray River, in Murray Bridge, South Australia. It meanders its way north through some very impressive countryside ending (at the time I walked it) in Eudunda, though progress was being made to extend this route further north to the charming town of Clare. You will walk through fields of canola, up rocky outcrops, stroll the vineyards of the Barossa Valley, share a paddock

or two with the sheep, cows and very noisy cockatoos.

This trail is named in the honour of the late 'Mr. Bushwalking', Terry Lavender, the architect of the route and a man who is also remembered for his part in the creation of the famous Heysen Trail. On the 17th of April 2016, the next 31-kilometre section opened, taking the walker through to Webb Gap, where the Lavender Trail meets the Heysen Trail for the first time.

*A field of canola, beautiful despite not being wild.*  
Photos: Michelle Ryan





## ACCOMMODATION

On research I found that no one had ever walked this route solo or end-to-end unaided before. Usually people would just walk sections at a time, but I wanted to knock it off in one go. It took a lot of emails, phone calls and research, but I finally worked it out, at times I was to walk a little further off track to find a place to stay, but it was well worth the added effort.

While planning, I found the locals incredibly easy to work with, having offers to stay with private residences as well as B&Bs that were all willing to keep me fed. By the end of the walk, and as a result of meeting the wonderful people who accommodated me, it is now possible for future walkers to go end-to-end by getting picked up from the trail and dropped back on the trail the next day.

Planning accommodation is essential, as camping is strictly not allowed at any point along the way. This may deter some potential walkers, but for anyone seeking a more European-style trail hiking experience, the Lavender Federation Trail is a must.

The following is a list of potential options for accommodation:

- **Rabbiters Hut.** Contact: Bill and Annette, [www.rabbitershut.com.au](http://www.rabbitershut.com.au), [info@rabbitershut.com.au](mailto:info@rabbitershut.com.au)
- **Pennys Rd B&B.** Contact: Gillian, [www.pennysroad.com.au](http://www.pennysroad.com.au), [hallsmith@ozemail.com.au](mailto:hallsmith@ozemail.com.au)
- **Weighbridge Motel.** Contact: Michael and Sandra, [weighbridgemotel@hotmail.com.au](mailto:weighbridgemotel@hotmail.com.au)
- **Footeside Farm.** Contact: Linda and Peter, [www.footesidefarm.com.au](http://www.footesidefarm.com.au), [info@footesidefarm.com](mailto:info@footesidefarm.com)
- **Light Hotel Eudunda.** Contact: Dawn and David, [davidanddawn@lighthotel.net.au](mailto:davidanddawn@lighthotel.net.au)

## MAPS

Map packs come in four sections at the moment and are currently available for purchase from the following outlets:

- Murray Bridge Visitor Centre, (08) 8539 1142
- Friends of the Heysen Trail, [www.heystrail.asn.au](http://www.heystrail.asn.au)
- Lavender Federation Trail Community, [www.lavenderfederationtrail.org.au](http://www.lavenderfederationtrail.org.au)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This beautiful walk would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of the Lavender Federation Trail Community. Anyone planning to take on this trail is strongly advised to contact them well in advance to ensure the best experience possible.

## THE WALK

I left Murray Bridge to follow old, disused train lines while delighting in the crisp morning air. Being a rural setting, there's a mix of native and introduced birdsong while rabbits scurry across the tracks in total confusion. A grey kangaroo jumps out and pauses for a moment to look at me, then off he went. I also spied a kingfisher with his morning catch that he is slapping against the branch. What a fantastic start to the day. My first day's walk was 29 kilometres through some wetlands, with a huge variety of water birds, then it was a stroll through the stunning Rocky Gully Reserve among mallee trees and rocky outcrops. After a short rest I was back on track when I saw something one would not quite expect to see out in the Australian countryside: some very

long necks reaching up to the tree tops.

Giraffes! No I didn't have stroke; I was passing the Monarto Zoo, one of the largest open-range zoos in the world.

It was a long day and I felt relieved to arrive at my accommodation at the Rabbiters Hut. On arriving, Bill and Annette left a plate of local cheeses and a cold beer followed by the best lasagne. The hut is a restored rural cottage sitting amongst the paddocks in peaceful surroundings.

Day Two was quite a diverse day of walking. I had 30 kilometres ahead of me and found myself walking on country roads among fields of bright, golden canola, paddocks filled with sheep and cows. I continued through some marshland, up a mountain, down the mountain and finishing as the final light disappeared. Not only was the terrain diverse, so was the fauna I saw. I nearly trod on two blue tongue lizards, I was swooped by magpies and later scared a large fox who was probably hunting the rabbits I had seen along the route. I also had to contend with cattle that refused to move from the path. There was a paddock of llamas and a little black pug who thought he was a much larger dog. The highlight of my day was the albino kangaroo boasting an incredibly heavy pouch – a rare sight indeed. This brilliant day finished off by a free juice from a lovely farmer and an amazing lamb curry that Annette had waiting for me back at the (aptly named, it seems) Rabbiters Hut. I have to thank Bill and Annette for going out of their way to transport me to and from the trail on this section of the walk, and for having me stay with them for two nights. Day Three offered a mere 20 kilometres with a lot fewer hills, more rolling paddocks, though not as quiet and peaceful as one would imagine. The cockatoos were going

*The author salutes the broad,  
clear skies above*





crazy, which meant rain was on the way. The scenery was so pretty it was like walking through a painting; so much so I just had to stop and relax in a field by a creek and take it all in.

Day Four, I had 27 kilometres to walk and I felt good. I had an amazing encounter with a mob of kangaroos that decided to come charging towards me. It felt like an ambush as they charged, only to then come to a sudden halt before turning and jumping over the fence.

My day ended pleasantly when I walked into the very pretty historical town of Springton. There was a lovely looking church, a general store and a pub. It was great to stock up on supplies and then have a beer.

Springton has some interesting German history and the most famous part is the large Herbig Tree. A German immigrant named Frederick Herbig lived in this hollowed out Red Gum with his young wife Caroline, where they had the first two of their sixteen children. I had the pleasure of staying at the homestead that they later built and lived in. A real treat.

Day Five started out cold, the scenery was again beautiful and there wasn't a huge walk ahead; only around 23 kilometres along the trail. When there was about five kilometres left to go, the sky grew extremely dark. I stopped to take a photo of a hill with a lone tree on top and dark moody clouds behind and suddenly the wind picked up, the air turned bitterly cold and icy rain pelted down hard and fast, soon turning into hailstones. The wind pushed me sideways and the rain stung my face as it showered down. Finally, I made it to my night's stay and the weather decided to settle down, the cockatoos' warnings were right. I stayed at Penny's B&B, where there was an old-fashioned wrought-iron bath with a wood fire burning next to it and a delicious chicken risotto awaiting me. After yesterday's storm I had woken to a beautiful sunrise with morning mist hugging

the paddock, looks like day six was to be a good one! After having a wonderful bath the night before, I was ready to tackle the 26 kilometres ahead of me. I had shared my lunch break with a lizard I named Bob, he was a bobtail lizard who really didn't care too

All manner of flowers were on show for the casual passerby



much if I sat next to him, also saw my second kingfisher – they are so small and very pretty. Then I finished the day in the town of Truro staying at the Weighbridge Motel. The first section of Day Seven had me walking through a spectacular gorge, it made me feel quite small as it towered over me. Then there was the very steep climb out the

other side to some fabulous views. This is a section of the trail you could spend hours exploring or just sitting and watching the scenery but I still had over 20 kilometres to walk, so I reluctantly tore myself away. The middle section of the day was dry and isolated with no shade and it felt endless. When I really couldn't walk much more, I came across another gorge known as 'The Gap'. This is where I saw my second albino kangaroo. Two in one trip! I stayed with a very lovely couple in their private home and was treated to a feast of food (including salmon!), followed by a smorgasbord for breakfast the next morning. On Day Eight I encountered more varied terrain and also saw my first snake of the trip, and as it was a hot day there were a lot of lizards out sunbaking. I climbed up the summit of 'Leakes Lookout', (526 metres) to see the incredible 360 degree views of the surrounding area and walked through some woodland and pastures before making my way to my final accommodation on the trail. This was the last night before the walk into Eudunda and I stayed at Footside Farm. It's an extraordinary farm that produces native plant foods. Linda, my host, made me a lovely wattle seed and roo curry followed by homemade wattle seed ice cream. When I woke on my last day, I felt excitement and nervousness at the same time – my journey along the Lavender Federation Trail was nearly done. I walked the last part of the trail on a high. It had been over 212 kilometres of the most beautiful countryside I have ever had the pleasure of walking. I started the trail nine days earlier in Murray Bridge and finished in Eudunda. When I made it to the end of my journey and reached the Light Hotel I was delighted to meet one of the Lavender Trail committee members, Peter Herriman, who shared a celebratory drink with me. I can now say I am the first ever solo unaided end-to-end to walk The Lavender Federation Trail. W

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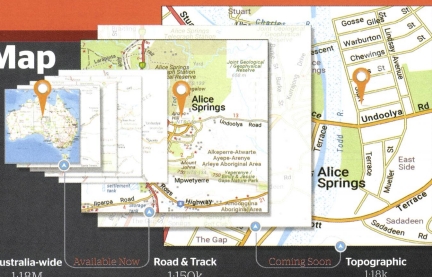
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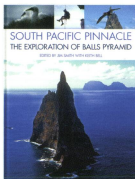
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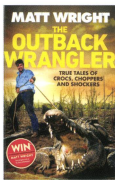
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**SOUTH PACIFIC PINNACLE: THE EXPLORATION OF BALLS PYRAMID – GUEST BOOK REVIEW BY BRUCE CAMERON**

by Jim Smith and Keith Bell (Self published, \$50)

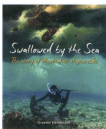
The editors of this new book on Balls Pyramid, Jim Smith and Keith Bell have done a fantastic job recording the climbing history of this giant sea stack from the very first ascent in 1965 to the most recent in 2014. Although its principal focus is on recording the climbing history of this magnificent rock feature, it also canvasses its discovery and exploration. The book also contains information on the natural history of the pyramid including its geology and wildlife such as the fabled phasmid making this book so much more than a climbing book. Jim Smith is a well-known historian, researcher and author. In collaboration with Australian climbing stalwart Keith Bell, the two have produced an outstanding account of the exploration and environment of Balls Pyramid. There is well over 200 colour and black and white images, most of which have never been published. The book is a must have for anyone interested in climbing history, nature and wild adventure. Purchase only via publisher's website: [www.ballspyramidbook.com](http://www.ballspyramidbook.com).



**THE OUTBACK WRANGLER: TRUE TALES OF CROCS, CHOPPERS AND SHOCKERS**

by Matt Wright with Tom Trumble (Penguin Random House Australia, \$35)

Matt Wright has long since gained notoriety as an international television celebrity whose image draws on the nuanced difference between the fictional Crocodile Dundee and the larger-than-life Steve Irwin. Starring in his own TV show on National Geographic hasn't dulled any of Wright's country charm, while his gung-ho attitude towards life and work is served up in spades. This is also true of this memoir, which sums up the man's life so far in under 250 pages. Tom Trumble, we imagine, has done an excellent job of helping to capture Wright's voice (which leaps off the page), while keeping the narrative bouncing along. A classic example of that voice: 'Taking part in any physical activity that takes you to your limits – that demands every shred of experience and physical endurance to perform and survive – is living to the max. For me, that's the only way to live'. For a reader who loves adventure, who isn't looking for thematic depth and doesn't mind a liberal helping of cliché, *The Outback Wrangler* is an entertaining read.



**SWALLOWED BY THE SEA: THE STORY OF AUSTRALIA'S SHIPWRECKS**

by Graeme Henderson (National Library of Australia, \$44.99)

Creator of the book, Graeme Henderson is a career maritime archaeologist and, as such, has drawn on his wealth of experience to compile a publication brimming with intrigue, historical facts, modern photography and archival images. This treasure trove of material is woven together to tell the story of some of Australia's most famous shipwrecks, beginning with the oldest-known wreck in Australia waters: *Tryal* in 1622, continuing through to the drowning of asylum seekers aboard the *SIEV 221* in 2010. The book, suitable for the coffee table, is highly visual and clearly laid out according to each wreck it describes. The content as prepared by the author straddles the boundary between adventure diving and maritime history – a heady mixture for anyone harbouring a secret love for tales of swashbuckling and treasure hunting.



**THE BEE FRIENDLY GARDEN**

by Doug Purdie (Allen and Unwin, \$45)

As you might expect, Doug Purdie presents in this book a guide to creating gardens that support local bee populations. And with bee populations crashing in many places around the world, Purdie's aim is to convince Australians to create a 'bee highway' across Australia in order to save them. It's not just European honeybees that are targeted either, with a special mention given to the native (and very handsome) blue-banded bee, which is suffering greatly as a result of urban expansion. Learn which plants to consider, which insects to control, as well as recipes for concoctions to help you do so – all of this from an experienced apiarist who manages his own network of more than 100 hives around Sydney. This book is an essential guide for the ecologically responsible gardener.

# Directory

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For more information, contact Campbell Phillips by email on [campbell.phillips@primereactive.com.au](mailto:campbell.phillips@primereactive.com.au) or telephone 03 9690 8766

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by Yoav Daniel Bar-Ness

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## WILD SHOT

PHOTO BY LUKE FRISKEN  
CANON POWERSHOT G16



## MAKING TRACKS

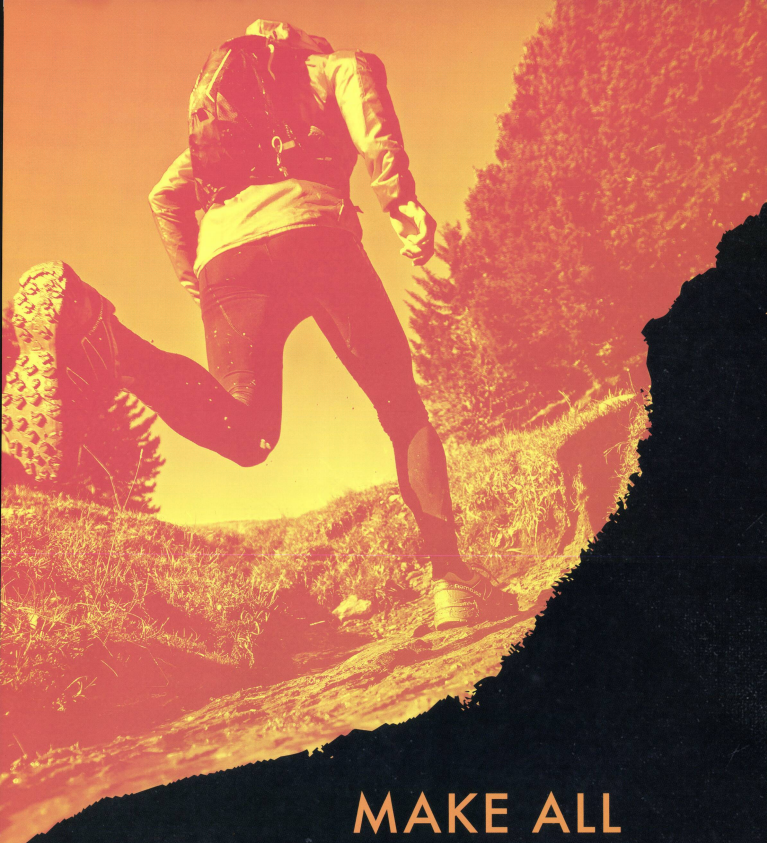
Luke Frisken from Mitcham, VIC writes: *Making tracks on Hochstetter Dome, Aoraki National Park, New Zealand. It was the opening day of climbing during the Melbourne University Mountaineering Club mountaineering camp 2014-15. The image was captured using a Canon PowerShot G16.*

Luke wins a pair of Salomon Speedcross Shoes, valued at \$199. This trail running shoe is a mainstay of the Salomon range, providing a lightweight, well-cushioned shoe that provides traction in all conditions.

For your chance to win a quality piece of outdoor kit, send your humorous, inspiring or spectacular shots to [wild@primecreative.com.au](mailto:wild@primecreative.com.au).

To be considered for the November/December Wild Shot, submit your best photo by October 7.





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